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WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

BY

THOMAS ROSCOE.

LONDON,
R. YORKE CLARKE & Cº GRACECHURCH STREET.

THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR;

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM

Official Records and other Authentic Documents.

BY

THOMAS ROSCOE, ESQ.

"Some Kings the name of Conquerors have assumed,
Some to be great, some to be gods presumed."—DRYDEN.

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INTRODUCTION.

While History is occupied with the public deeds of the great and the mighty of the earth, and with the consequences which result from them, it is the province of Biography to penetrate into *the inmost recesses of their souls;* to explore the peculiarities of individual disposition, character, and way of thinking; to study the influence of external circumstances upon these; to search out the real motives of actions; to follow its subject into the privacy of domestic and social life; and to draw a faithful picture alike of his virtues and vices, his excellences and his failings, his passions, propensities, and eccentricities—in short, of every trait by which he is distinguished from the rest of mankind.

The observant reader need scarcely be reminded how often trivial circumstances and expressions afford a clearer insight into the real motives, views, characters, and dispositions of men than could ever be obtained from the mere consideration of their public conduct. Hence the sagacious biographer, extending his re-

searches to minute details, may chance to discover truths which elude the eye of the historian, content with the great outlines of general facts.

The "Lives of the Kings of England," written with such impressions, will therefore, it is hoped, prove a valuable auxiliary to those readers who, fond of tracing effects up to their true causes, are desirous of ascertaining the real share contributed by each of the British Sovereigns to those results which have conferred on our country and nation their present proud pre-eminence in power, prosperity, freedom, and glory. To such as seek amusement only, they may prove equally acceptable, as a connected record of the sayings and doings of personages, many of them ranking foremost as models of chivalry, and most of them enjoying the highest renown among the politicians and the warriors of their own times. The series commences with the Norman Conquest, when History begins to shake off the legends which cling to her when narrating the lives of even the most eminent of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, and which are still strikingly exemplified in the sculptured frieze in the chapel of Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey.

If the conquest of England by the Normans stamped its characteristics with startling distinctness upon both English and European history, the stern commanding figure of the Conqueror towers in no less bold relief above all his contemporaries, as well as all the royal

and most distinguished successors of whose dynasty he became the founder. He fills the first and the most important place on the grand historic canvas. Round the central orb of his deeply politic system succeeding generations of princes may be said to revolve, like the inferior satellites, which have only a limited and prescribed course to fulfil. He in truth created an era—even in that mighty and stirring age of heroism and adventure: he raised into gigantic proportions, and arrayed with splendour the rude unfinished structure of feudality; laid deep the groundwork of gorgeous enchanted palaces of chivalry and romance, which threw such lustre over the middle ages; and, by the vigour of his genius, established monarchic power in spite of the nobles and the people, and the repeated efforts of both to thwart his plans of royal government.

Previously to the revolutions, for such they really were, which he effected, first in Normandy and then in England, European monarchs were esteemed rather the liege-lords, the mere feudal chiefs, the elected leaders of the people, forming part of the aristocracy from which they sprung—not the rulers of submissive subjects—that *beau idéal* of sovereign rule, reserved for the policy and daring of the great Norman to develop. He was emphatically then the European and British prototype of royalty, the great exemplar for the career of modern kings. Born with a regality of spirit that delighted in daring and magnificent displays of every kind, and bred

in hardships and in trials, which endued him with statesmanlike wisdom, yet, ever "a daring pilot in extremity," he ably directed the vessel of his happy fortunes into the new world of monarchy which his soaring ambition so much coveted.

The patriarch of a long regal line, without *him* the future monarchs of England, if not of Europe, would, like the Anglo-Saxons, have reigned or ceased to reign at the will of a powerful noble, or by the voice of a venal crowd. All future questions indeed of royal prerogative and policy appeared to emanate from the reign and times of the Conqueror, as precedents of the great legislator who raised his splendid structure of Norman feudality and laws upon the shattered fragments of popular government, upon the ruins of the simpler and more beneficent system so grandly chalked out by the great Alfred.

The framer of a new system of English laws and government, William I. likewise presented the earliest example to his successors in the career of foreign conquest and colonial possession; and the most heroic and distinguished among all may justly be thought to have inherited, like a royal heir-loom, those prerogatives which enabled them to raise the national character and glory, to extend their dominion, to acquire the supremacy of the seas, and to become chief participators in the colonies and commerce of the world.

To trace all the bearings and relations, with their

causes and consequences, of so eventful an epoch as the Norman conquest, fraught with the destinies of vast regions, of innumerable tribes and nations, yet to be brought under the same Anglo-Norman sway, established by the daring genius of a single man, the head of a small province, is, however, a task which the author frankly confesses to be far beyond his powers, and one which, as a mere biographer, he never for a moment contemplated.

At the same time, it was impossible to pass over these points without comment, intimately blended as they are with the life, character, and actions of the monarch and the man; but they have been kept in subordination to the chief subject — the exposition and elucidation of the genius and qualities of a warrior and a statesman, the daring and the grandeur of whose achievement are almost unparalleled in the history of the world; for it dictated to a mighty nation the future path which its successive governments were to pursue; from which its weal or woe has pre-eminently sprung: and evidences of severe truths will thus appear in the delineation of this monarch, in the historic groups by which he was surrounded, in the depths of the lights and shadows, and in all the adjuncts of the composition, including the peculiar costume and manners of the times.

Nor would the author have ventured even upon this humbler task, had he not conceived that there were

some novel features in the subject not hitherto fully brought into public view to recommend it, more especially connected with the earlier portions of the Conqueror's life. It is on these that new light has recently been thrown by the industry and research both of foreign and native writers; and, with the advantage of new materials, they have taken their views from the best accredited sources.

It may be freely admitted indeed that, without such publications as *La Nouvelle Histoire de Normandie* by a society of learned persons, the elaborate work by M. Lappenberg on the Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, the recently found *Haddon Manuscript*, a work of immense research, not before consulted by any writer on the subject, and other valuable documents in the British Museum, no complete or satisfactory biography of the great Norman could be produced.

Yet these materials would not of themselves have induced the author to engage in this work, had he not enjoyed the equally inestimable advantage of consulting many able and distinguished modern writers of his own country upon almost every branch of its political, civil, and constitutional history; a laborious analysis and estimate of whose respective views may justly be said to form the only merit to which he presumes to lay any claim. To the admirable works of Hallam, Turner, Palgrave, Lingard, Brodie, Russel, Alison, and Smythe, to the sources which they have pointed out,

to the luminous views and statements which they contain, the author is proud to confess his large and peculiar obligations, distinct from those due to the host of earlier writers acknowledged as the received authorities upon all subjects connected with Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods of our history.

In addition to these ample authorities, mention might here be made of the new Record and Charity Commissions, the Lords' Committee Report on the Dignity of a Peer—all which inquiries, as well as those into the State Papers' Office, have served to throw light upon many collateral points of early English history, and upon the constitutional, civil, or political progress of the estates of the kingdom.

Of such lights, as far as they served to illustrate the Anglo-Norman dynasty or the character and actions of its great founder, the author in his general views has endeavoured to avail himself, aided by the valuable researches of the most recent writers upon detached portions of our history.

It has likewise been his especial endeavour to collect more copious and accurate details than any writer has yet given relative to the early life and actions of the Conqueror, when he held sway over Normandy only, that school in which the real strength and magnanimity of his character shone conspicuous; to trace his motives, to record his sayings, his national policy, his encouragement of the useful arts, his state coun-

cils, the splendour of his court festivals and military exhibitions, with all those politic arts by which he raised Normandy to a power which proved adequate to overthrow the firm-seated empire of the Anglo-Saxon, and to hurl back the tide of Danish invasion, so long the terror of the British shores.*

* In support of the author's views regarding the wide-extended and permanent influence of the Norman Conquest, and of the genius and character of the Conqueror, upon our national institutions, privileges and habits, several corroborating circumstances and singular coincidences have arisen during the completion of his laborious task. One or two of these he has already recorded in his notes, and at the moment of preparing this Introduction, he obtained the following curious particulars relating to Newport, South Wales, which are too interesting and too applicable to his purpose to be omitted.

"On Friday last, about ten o'clock, Thomas Davies Lloyd, Esq., of Bronwydd, Lord of Kemes, visited this borough, the ancient abode of his noble ancestors. He was accompanied by his London solicitor, and on his arrival was received by the Mayor, John Harries, Esq., and Thomas George, Esq., solicitor, steward of Mr. Lloyd's various manorial courts and lordships. The church bells rung merry peals throughout the day, in honour of their feudal lord's arrival, and, after inspecting several interesting localities connected with the town, the party sat down to an excellent dinner provided by the hostess of the Castle Inn ; Mr. L. presiding, who did not before his departure for Haverfordwest, forget to distribute, after the manner of his knightly ancestors, various bountiful 'largesses' among the poor of the place.

"It may not perhaps be generally known that the barony of Kemes is of a unique character, there being no parallel to it in Great Britain. It was originally acquired by conquest in the time of William the Conqueror by Martin of Tours, first Lord of Kemes, and was in a great measure independent of the Crown of England. Its extent is great, comprising as it does twenty-two parishes, and embracing a circuit of upwards of fifty miles. The Lords of Kemes exercised many peculiar and important privileges, and, though modern usage has abrogated some, yet there are several valuable ones now exercised by their lineal descendant and representative. The town of Newport is incorporated by a charter granted by William Martin, Lord of Kemes, in the reign of

In finally giving the result of his labours to the public, the author feels bound to return his warm acknowledgments to the trustees and the official authorities of the British Museum, for the readiness and liberality with which they submitted both manuscripts and printed works to his inspection: indeed it is impossible to appreciate their invariable courtesy and attention too highly. To Sir F. Madden, the conserva-

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King John, which charter still exists in the archives of the Bronwydd family, and this is the only instance on record of the privileges of incorporation having been created by a subject. The mayor of Newport, an *ex-officio* justice of the peace, is annually appointed by the Lord of Kemes, and is assisted by a certain number of burgesses in the execution of his duties. It is the opinion of the most eminent lawyers of the day, that the Barony of Kemes is a virtual sovereignty."—(From an excellent and public-spirited journal, published at Bristol, "The Great Western Advertiser" of November 22nd, 1845.)

The author takes this opportunity of referring to another discovery by Mr. Firth, the chief clerk of the archives at Guildhall; namely, of the two original charters granted by William I. to the City of London, supposed to have been lost, and already alluded to in the author's work. They are very brief, not more than six or eight lines, as nearly all the Conqueror's conveyances of rights or manors, whether to cities or to huntsmen, are found to be, and *fac-similes* of these, with a particular description, are to be seen in "Grainger's History of London," —a splendid copy of which is in the hands of Mr. Henry Bohn, of York-street, Covent Garden.

Nor ought the author to dismiss this interesting subject without referring the reader to the curious antiquarian discoveries lately made among the ruins of the ancient Priory of Lewes. These are the remains of Gundreda, fifth daughter of William I., and of William de Warren, who are known to have been buried in the Chapter House of that religious establishment. A particular account of this occurrence may be found in the Brighton and Lewes journals (November 1st and 8th, 1845), and also a still more full one in the "Illustrated London News," with the exact representation of the cists, engraved on wood, with the remains as they appeared on the discovery and exhibition of them.

tor of the manuscripts, to Mr. Panizzi, the chief Librarian, to Mr. Cates and to Mr. Marshall, he considers himself especially indebted for the success with which he has been enabled to prosecute his repeated and multifarious inquiries.

It may not be improper to add that the work will form a companion and complement to that in which the "Lives of the Queens of England" are related by the felicitous pen of Miss Agnes Strickland, with the peculiar grace of her own sex and with the research and strength of the other.

T. R.

March, 1846.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

(drawn by G. P. Harding, Esq., F.S.A.)

Original Portrait of William the Conqueror. (From the Coins of his Reign.) . . . . . *Frontispiece.*

Landing of William the Conqueror at Pevensey. (From an ancient Drawing in the British Museum.) . *Vignette Title.*

THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and parentage of the Conqueror—Loves of Robert and Arlette—New memorials relating to them—Arlette's character and conduct—English prejudices—Chronological dates—Robert's devoted attachment to Arlette, and to their son—Anecdotes of his family—Historical poem of Benois de St. More—Reputed marriage of Arlette—William's birth-place—Castle of Falaise—Description of it—Early life and education—Anecdotes and characteristics—Military exercises—Liberal education—Legitimate aspirants to the dukedom—Duke Robert's policy—Presents William to the States—Acknowledged as his heir—Henry King of France appointed guardian—William is presented at the French court—Duke Robert's departure for the Holy Land—Anecdotes—Education at the French court—Studies—Military occupations—Field sports—Troubles in Normandy—Duke Robert's death—Return of the pilgrim knights—Feudal system in Normandy—Insurrections and violence of the barons—William invited to assume the ducal crown—King Henry's opposition—His intrigues—Joins William's enemies—Singular scene—The rebel barons defeated—William takes the field—His talent in war—His docility, prudence, and good fortune—Moderation and clemency—Continued successes—War with France—King Henry retreats—Offers to negotiate—William's policy and magnanimity—Generous conduct—Conciliates the barons—Subdues and pardons his uncle—Treachery of King Henry defeated by the young duke—Ignominious flight and humiliation—Exploits of the Conqueror—His popularity with the Normans—Enters into a truce with King Henry—Returns in triumph to Falaise—Celebration of his victories.

William I., surnamed the Conqueror, King of England, and Duke of Normandy, was born on the 14th of

October, in the year 1024. He was the illegitimate son of Robert,[1] sixth Duke of Normandy, and of Arlette,[2] the daughter of a tanner at Falaise.

It is not a little amusing to trace the ingenuity of the doughty vouchers of historic fiction, whenever they have a favourite point to carry; and in all that related to the adventure of Arlette, and the manner in which she attracted the eye of her princely lover, they found a rich field in which to expatiate.[3]

According to one of these amusing versions, Lord Robert, for he was then, as appears from various dates, neither a duke nor an earl, but a simple baron, while engaged in levying the ducal income-tax upon the refractory tanners, met with the tanner's daughter, and at once became a suitor to her beauty.[4] A second describes him as riding leisurely by the way-side,[5] when he observed a party of young maidens dancing, and was suddenly smitten with the surpassing grace and loveli-

[1] Several Norman chroniclers and most English historians, state that Robert was the eighth duke—evidently an error, if we may rely upon dates. He could not be the eighth Norman duke, as, previously to the invasion of France by Rollo, Normandy was known by the name of Neustria, and, commencing with that Danish founder of a dynasty, of which the present queen of Great Britain is a descendant, William the Conqueror ranks as the seventh duke.

[2] Arlette is her proper and general designation by the early Norman historians.

[3] *Benois de St. More*, in his curious and amusing heroic poem, written at the request of King Henry II., in which he celebrates the exploits of the Norman dukes and kings, gives us many naïve specimens, in a eulogistic strain, which partakes not a little of the marvellous. At the same time a few historic truths may be gleaned from it. He is surpassed, however, in his efforts to please the reigning family by one of the Saxon genealogists, who tells a very plausible tale of the royal parentage and descent of the Conqueror's mother, Arlette ; and who shall venture to disprove his story of the royal maid of Falaise ?—See Lives of the English Queens, by Agnes Strickland.

[4] Chron. de Nor. ; Nouvelle Hist.

[5] Henderson, Life of the Conqueror.

ness of Arlette. By a third it is asserted that he met the lady—for she herself declares she was of gentle birth —in passing through his native town of Falaise;[6] and that he invited her attendance the same evening at his lodgings. A more agreeable supposition, but perhaps almost as apocryphal, is that of the lovers having first met at a dance during some public festival given by the "notables" or leading men of the ancient city of Falaise, among whom the sire of Arlette assuredly held a respectable rank.[7]

It is strange that we should not earlier have turned our attention to the version of the story, as given in the poem of St. More,[8] not the least probable, and certainly the most romantic[9] among them all. Here, returning from the sports of the field, Robert surprises her with some of her young companions bathing her feet in the limpid waters of a stream that ran at the foot of the castle. The description left us of the personal charms of the fair "Arlette" by her poetic chronicler is very flattering to her.

[6] Hayward.

[7] Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Poésies de St. More, &c.

[8] L'Estoire et la Généalogie des ducs qui unt été en Normandie; which is described in the catalogue of the Harleian Library as consisting of "A Chronicle of the dukes of Normandy," from the beginning to the death of Henry I., king of England, written in very old French verses, by Benois de Sainte More."—Bibl. Harl. B. M. Manuscripts, 1717. It was written by the desire of Henry II.

[9] Robert was never married to any other lady, and St. More represents her less in the light of a mistress than of a bride, as she is made to speak of herself. Contemporary authorities are agreed that she was uniformly treated with consideration and respect by Robert and by his son. The ample dower subsequently settled upon her, on her marriage with the Lord of Canterville, and the rapid promotion of her sons, who rose to high rank under the government of the Conqueror, all tend to show that her equivocal position was attended with many advantages.

Our poetic celebrator of the memorable adventure of Arlette, first describes the residence of the "good lord Robert" at the castle of Falaise, "a spot extremely salubrious and agreeable." Introducing the subject with a flourish of trumpets, he very properly, as if preparing his readers for the dénouement, takes care to inform them that one of the greatest pleasures he had in life was "chatting with the ladies." One day, having just returned from the chase in his usual gay mood, for he was merry it seems, as well as liberal and magnificent, he chanced to cast his eye upon a fair creature, with her young companions, bathing her feet, and whitening linen in the stream—

> "With other daughters of the 'Borgeis,'
> Right fair and more than two or three."

Not being over-anxious about their work, they were "aye gaily gibing and jesting with each other to while away the hour, 'being all peers together,' in the manner that young maidens are wont." The day was beautiful; the lovely spring-tide genial and warm. Her light dress concealed neither the symmetry of her shape, nor the exquisite whiteness and delicacy of her hands and feet—"fair token of the most exquisite form and beauty." No wonder, we are quaintly told, that a young prince should have preferred them even to the *fleur de lis* which they so much exceeded in his eyes;[1] or that, struck with admiration, he should be suddenly "smitten where he stood." "She is the daughter," we are next told, "of a citizen of good degree; she is of rare prudence, affable, and as high-spirited as beautiful; she is a *blonde* with

[1] "Que ce fu bien au duc avis
Que neifs est pale e flors de lis
Avers la soc grant blanchor."

open brow and beaming eyes, which never shone with pride or scorn; but whose sweet benignity and alluring frankness gave a fresh charm to the soft, mellow tones that breathed in her voice. Her complexion is exquisitely fair; she has a finely chiselled mouth, nose and chin; a grace that defied rivalry, with a neck and arms surpassing all the prince had before seen." Her attractions, in short, are made to excel those of any other maiden throughout the whole dukedom. The poet, then, very elaborately assures us that Robert wished to obtain her for his own above all other things.[2] So he forthwith despatches a chevalier, his chamberlain, "a man of sense," who proceeds with the affair in a most business-like manner. He says, in a wise soliloquy, that he will "speak with the father, the good citizen, so that there shall be no misunderstanding on the subject."

After a long exordium, the chargé d'affaires comes to the point, and offers so round a sum, with an establishment and provision so magnificent, as might appear to leave little room for hesitation, and none for a final refusal. He bids still higher—to endow her with a rich seignory, and love her "with a great love." But he still fails to shake the tanner's honour, who flies into a great passion, and retorts upon the chamberlain with proper spirit,[3] for he was one of the principal citizens of Falaise, and it annoyed him to think that he could not give his own daughter in marriage with the consent of her relatives and friends. He prides himself upon his honourable resistance to the tempting offers of the chamberlain, till the fair Arlette herself appears on the scene, as the person most interested in the dispute. She points out to the tanner the future aggrandisement

[2] "Li dux la valt ser tote rien." [3] "Qui mult se tuit à Esgarez."

of his family, and finally succeeds in smoothing all difficulties.

The poet on this takes occasion to extol the skill and prudence of the lady, who contrives to give to the whole affair the sanction of a public engagement. She declares that she *will* go to the castle, not like a poor chambermaid at command,[4] but as the free maiden daughter of a gallant man,[5] to add to the honour of her family, and for her own advantage, so that she need not to be ashamed. Neither levity, she declares, nor folly of any kind, shall influence her in so serious a proceeding, nor will she deign to accept lord Robert's invitation, "if she is to go on foot." She requires that an escort of palfreys and due attendance shall be sent to her, "that she may go more pleasantly." Her princely lover, of course, complies, and the poet seems quite to exult in her conquest over the father of the Conqueror, congratulating her on her fortune, and describing with minute care her beautiful apparel, especially her pretty pelisse.[6] Then her "courte mantle," so easy and flowing; her bridal head-tire, so brilliant and gay, with all the paraphernalia of a duchess, which extort the admiration of the parents, whom she is described as tenderly consoling while mournfully taking her leave. This assuredly looks very like a bridal array, so open and so public as to defy the censorious, and to imply the existence, not merely of previous courtship, but of some marriage pledge, sufficient to countenance the supposition of several contemporaries that her lover had privately espoused her.[7]

[4] "Ne come povre chambrière."

[5] "Prodoruc," a gentleman.

[6] "Blanche, fresche e lec sans luz."

[7] The open and lady-like manner in which she was subsequently treated, and the handsome dowries she received, tend to prove, as she asserted, that she had kept her eye upon her future establishment.

The poet then bursts into a prophetic strain, on the birth of an heroic prince, who shall rival Hector, and surpass all that had been achieved by King Arthur or Charlemagne. He boldly asserts that she was her lover's lawful bride;[8] and that it was for this reason, Fortune with the permission of Providence would not fail to promote their noble heir.

We are indeed not aware of any poem of the kind in which the lovers appear to greater advantage, from the naïve and graceful manner in which the description of the love scenes is given. If we can only excuse the strain of eulogy which runs through some of its brightest passages in consideration of its being written at the request of a potent monarch, we shall have no reason, as readers of genuine rhyming histories of those eventful times, to be discontented with the amusing traits and incidents interspersed throughout this poem. We may form some idea, then, how the gay Saint More's chivalrous description of the loves of Robert and Arlette must have been appreciated by their royal descendants seated upon a British throne, and how interesting it was esteemed at the court of the second Henry, not then as now seen dimly through the guise of its quaint old French, but fresh from the mint of the favourite court style of Normandy. We must, however, admit that the historic romance of Saint More has been long divested of its original attractions, and that, with all its sources of interest and entertainment, it must fail to give the tanner's daughter, though said to have been descended from Anglo-Saxon kings,[9] an uncontested title to the consortship of Duke Robert of Normandy.

By the subsequent marriage of Arlette with the Lord

[8] "Ne la mie deshonorée." [9] Saxon Genealogy.

of Canterville, her relations with the ducal family seem by no means to have been disturbed. By this marriage she had two sons,[1] both of whom rose to distinction in the reign of the Conqueror, and a daughter named Muriel, who afterwards became Countess of Albemarle.[2]

Having now broken a lance in honour of the fair Arlette, and with the aid of St. More endeavoured to rescue her name from some of the obloquy attached to it, from the Anglo-Saxon aversion to her descendants,[3] it is time to recur to our more immediate subject.

Few details of a character to be relied upon respecting the early life and education of William, have survived That good fortune which never deserted him in after life, shone with equal benignity upon his infancy. He appears to have soon become a favourite with his father, and he was carefully nurtured and brought up in the

[1] Robert and Odo. Robert appears to have been a favourite Christian name among the Normans. It is remarked that there were no fewer than four Roberts of illustrious birth, all contemporaries, namely, Robert, Duke of Normandy ; Robert, the archbishop, uncle to Robert and brother of Richard II. ; Robert, King of France ; and Robert, afterwards Earl of Cornwall, the Conqueror's half-brother.—Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie.

[2] This lady had two daughters, nieces of the Conqueror, one of whom, named Judith, was afterwards given by him in marriage to an influential Saxon noble, named Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland ; and we shall again have occasion to allude to her when she appears upon the stage in no very enviable character.—Orderic Vital. Nouv. Hist. de Normandie.

[3] So great was this aversion of the English, that it extended even to her name, and to all kind of mean calumnies, such as were propagated by the enemies of her illustrious son. They did not scruple to apply to any woman of light character the name borne by the fair maid of Falaise ; and as it came in time to be pronounced *Arlotte*, *Arlotta*, and *Charlotte*, they retained the *H*, and dropping the French termination, abbreviated the word ; and it was thus the English language was proverbially enriched with that unpleasing epithet *Harlot*.—Vestigia Anglicana. Ang. Sax. Dictionary. Horne Tooke.

ducal palace or castle at Falaise.[4] He must have been about four years old when the ducal sceptre was assumed

[4] It is averred, from an ancient manuscript discovered at Falaise, that its famous castle was founded by Julius Cæsar, *quasi Domus Julii*, or the Julian towers. William, surnamed *Armoricus*, in his poem on the siege of Falaise, in 1203, declares that its name was derived from the rocks on which it was built and by which it is surrounded. It is situated at the extremity of the town, but separated from it by a broad ditch. It had huge walls flanked with towers, and to it was attached a small chapel dedicated to St. Prix. The tower or donjon was a vast square edifice, and near to it was a smaller, the usual residence of the dukes ; and one tradition states that from its windows Robert first beheld the lovely Arleitte de Verprez, asserted by some to have been the daughter of Fouques de Verprez, attached to that prince's service, and a gentleman by birth. Another portion is called "la tour de la Reine," near which is seen the breach made by Henry IV., when he took it by assault in the year 1590. M. l'Abbé de Longuerue is of opinion that neither castle nor town trace their origin farther back than the dukes of Normandy. The adjoining town was exempted by William from all duties and other imposts, upon account of his having there first seen the light.—Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie ; Chron. de Nor.

In a recent description of a visit to this castle—"The Cradle of the Conqueror"—by a more modern and charming writer, Louisa Stuart Costello, we seem to enter the region of historic fancy, where scenes long past appear once more before our eyes. "Rising suddenly from the banks of a brawling crystal stream, a huge mass of grey rocks, thrown in wild confusion one on the other, sustains on its summit the imposing remains of a feudal castle, whose high white tower, alone and in perfect preservation, looks round over an immense tract of smiling country, and tells a tale of by-gone power and grandeur. Adjoining this mighty donjon are walls of enormous thickness, adorned with a range of beautiful windows, with circular arches of early Norman style. Close to the last of these, whose pillars with wreathed capitals are as sharp as in the first year of their construction, is a low door leading to a small chamber in the thickness of the wall ; there is a little recess in one corner, and a small window, through whose minute opening glimpses of a fine prospect can be caught. It was in this narrow room, once said to have been adorned with gold and vermilion, and other gay hues, that a child was born in secrecy and mystery, and that by the imperfect light his beautiful mother looked upon the features of the future hero of Normandy. A few antique houses still exist, but they have no elegance of carving, as at Angers and Bourges,

by his father, who perceiving "what a fair and goodly child he was," bearing a close resemblance to his Norman line, embraced and acknowledged him as his son. He ordered princely attendance to be paid him in his own palace, and up to his ninth year it is stated that duke Robert bestowed the utmost care upon his education.[5]

William appears to have been early inured to those military exercises in which he so conspicuously excelled. At the age of five he is said to have engaged in the mimic game of war, commanding a battalion of little urchins, at the head of whom he went through the evolutions customary at that time. The germs of the feudal chief and the sovereign were first unfolded in his boyish rule over these miniature soldiers, as well as that extreme love of discipline which he afterwards so rigidly enforced. He was at once arbitrator and dictator in all their disputes, and his decisions, it is added, were remarkable for their acuteness and equity.[6] One or two curious traits of his boyish spirit have also been preserved. He displayed the combative not less than

to atone for their extremely slovenly and ruinous aspect. One is called the house of William the Conqueror, and a rudely sculptured bust is exhibited there which is dignified by his name.

"There is a good public library, that great resource of all French towns, and several fine buildings dedicated to public utility; but the boys of the College excite the envy of the stranger, for their abode is on the broad ramparts of the fine old chateau of William the Conqueror."—The Cradle of the Conqueror. (See *Dublin University Mag.*)

The unfortunate Prince Arthur was for some time a prisoner in the castle; but was subsequently removed to Cherbourg, where he was assassinated by the hand of his uncle, and his body thrown into the sea.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

[5] Nouv. Hist. de Normandie; Chron. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; Duchesne; Henderson.

[6] Chron. de Nor.; Hist. de Normandie; W. Pictaviensis; W. of Malms.

the acquisitive propensity among his infant subjects, not unfrequently challenging them, as he did Harold, to a single encounter.

It was upon occasion of duke Robert's departure for the Holy Land, on a pilgrimage, that his son's residence was transferred from Falaise to Paris. An amusing scene is recorded to have taken place between Duke Robert and his lords in a general assembly of the deputies of the States. Aware that William had no legitimate title to the succession, he determined to adopt him as his heir, to the exclusion of his own brothers, of Alan duke of Brittany, and of his cousin the count of Burgundy.[7] This was a bold project in the face of so many legitimate claimants, and one which Robert would hardly have attempted without great confidence in the promising talents and high courage of his son. Though yet so young, having been educated under his father's own eye, surrounded by his soldiers and by his people, he must have given some proofs of the firmness and superiority of his character. His noble features, and eager, fiery spirit, had rendered him a general favourite with the Normans, and Robert knew how far he might trust them, when he summoned his proud relatives and his barons to attend him at the Hôtel de Ville.

Already were there both secret and open aspirants to the ducal succession. Nor was the duke, it appears, ignorant of their views; for, under pretence of dissuading him from his journey, they had severally tried to sound his intentions, and now they obeyed the summons with alacrity. The youth of William, independently of his illegitimacy, would, they expected, as in many simi-

[7] Duchesne; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Malms.; W. Geniet.

lar cases, afford ample reason for passing him over in their favour.

The surprise and disappointment, therefore, of Robert's legitimate relatives must have been extreme; and it was only perhaps to the strong competition of conflicting interests that he owed their submission to his will, and the reluctant acknowledgment of William as his heir.

Guy, count of Burgundy, first opened the discussion by expressing his fear that, during his good cousin's pilgrimage, the estates, consisting of barons, knights, soldiers, and notables, would alike be left without a head. "Not so, by my faith!" was the duke's quick rejoinder, eager to arrest a strong debate in the outset, and to extinguish each rival's hopes in favour of one beloved successor—"Not so! I will leave you a master in my place. I have a little bastard here;[8] he is little, indeed, but he will grow with God's grace; nay, I have great hopes that he will prove a gallant man; therefore I do pray you all to receive him from my hands, for from this time forth I give him *seizin* of the duchy of Normandy as my known and acknowledged heir; and I constitute Alan, duke of Brittany, governor and seneschal of Nor-

[8] It was not unusual in France for natural sons to succeed to their father's dignities, even to the very highest. Thierry, son of Clovis—Sigisbert, of Dagobert—are instances of it. In England, Athelstan, Edward the Martyr, and Harold Harefoot; and it was the same in Portugal and other countries. It had certainly the authority of antiquity in its favour; for we trace it back to those great worthies, the knight adventurers of their times, Hercules, Alexander, and Romulus, to say nothing of Timotheus, Brutus, Themistocles; and the chronicler adds to them the renowned king Arthur. Again, we have Homer, Demosthenes, Bion, Bartolus, Gratian, Peter Lombard, Andreas, and divers of most flourishing name; among whom our Conqueror may worthily be ranged. —Hayward, Lives, &c.; Chron. de Nor.; Hist. de Nor.

mandy, until I shall return, or that William, my son, shall become of manly age. Nevertheless, my lord, Henry king of France, shall have the charge and guardianship of the child."[9]

Duke Robert, then taking the future Conqueror in his arms, tenderly embraced and kissed him, after which he presented him to the assembled peers and notables to receive their due homage according to the Norman rules, with the oaths of fealty to his state and person.[1]

This prompt and decided conduct had the desired effect. Taken by surprise, with no point of union round which to rally, the factious aspirants were silenced, and compelled to unite with the peers and state deputies in the recognition of William's claims. But the seeds of future discontent and sedition were not the less active in their breasts.

This important object being gained, Robert's next step was to remove his young heir, with the consent of his chief barons and prelates, to the French court.[2] It was a wise measure to withdraw him from the dangerous influence of faction, and, by placing him under the protection of his sovereign lord, to enable him to hold his

[9] Vie du Duc Guillaume, &c.; W. Malms.; Chron. de Nor.; W Geniet; Hayward's Lives, &c. [1] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

[2] It is stated by some historians that William's two uncles were associated as joint guardians with the French king. But to this duke Robert makes no allusion in his address on presenting his heir to the assembly of the States. It was to guard against their intrigues that he selected king Henry, and made Alan, duke of Brittany, his grand seneschal. "So William," says a quaint old writer, "at that age succeeded his father, having very generous and aspiring spirits, both to resist abroad and to rule at home. He was committed to the government of two of his uncles, so as it may seem he was committed to these tutors as a lamb should be committed to the tutelage of wolves."—Chron. de Nor.; Hayward, Lives, &c.; W. of Malms.

more legitimate rivals and his unruly barons in some degree of awe.

William was in his ninth year[3] when his father, taking a final leave of Normandy, proceeded to Paris to present him to his guardian. It must have been to both an interesting and affecting scene. Duke Robert was about to take his last farewell of the beloved object of all his cares, for whom his present act proved the extent of his affection, and how tenderly he regarded his interests, in thus soliciting in person the countenance of his sovereign. Henry at the same time was under the deepest obligations to his kinsman, who had not only vanquished that king's enemies, but replaced the crown he had lost upon his brows.[4] Attended by his pilgrim knights, duke Robert was introduced holding his young son by the hand. He was received by the French monarch seated upon his throne, and surrounded by a splendid court. As if to render the solemn appeal to the royal guardianship more impressive, Robert led him to his sovereign's feet, and after embracing him with tears, he bade him kneel and do obeisance to his sovereign lord. Henry also embraced him, and as graciously accepted the proffered trust. The handsome features, serious expression, and noble bearing of the boy, seem even then to have impressed the beholders with a favourable opinion of his future fortunes, in accordance with that already expressed

[3] This is calculating his nativity from 1024 ; but, if we take 1026, as most Norman writers assert, he was only in his seventh year. The former date would leave an interval of two years between Robert's departure and his death, when William was eleven, but he did not formally succeed to the dukedom till he had reached his sixteenth year.—Nouv. Hist.

[4] Chron. de Nor. ; Hist. de Nor. ; Duchesne ; W. Pict. ; W. of Malms.

by his father before the peers and prelates of the land.[5]

Upon his route through France, duke Robert met with a singular incident which served to prove his exemplary humility and forbearance in the character of a knight-pilgrim. It was customary to wear "the lowly weeds" of Christian penitence over the armour; and one of the wardens of a religious establishment, at which the noble pilgrims halted to repose, seeing Robert walk humbly behind his companions, struck him a sharp blow with his staff, crying, "Hasten, thou loiterer, to wait upon thy Lord!" The duke's attendants, indignant at such an insult, drew their swords, and would have killed the man on the spot; but Robert, as if mindful of his sacred mission, interfered, observing, "it was the duty of pilgrims to suffer, and, thinking of their Saviour, to receive blows without returning them."

Robert in the first place repaired to Rome, where he was invested by Benedict IX. with the order of the cross. Thence he proceeded to Constantinople, where, doffing for a season his pilgrim habit, he is said to have appeared with a splendour which gained him the title of the "Magnificent," at the imperial court. Even the shoes of the mule upon which he rode were of gold, so fixed as to drop off, that they might be picked up by the people, and thus convey an imposing idea of the Norman wealth and power. The emperor on his side insisted upon defraying Robert's expenses while he continued to sojourn in the capital of the East. Prosecuting his route, he was taken ill of a fever, and, being unable either to mount on horseback or to go on foot, he was placed in a litter borne by sixteen Moorish

[5] Thierry, Anglo Normans; M. Sismondi; W. Pict.

slaves. While thus travelling, we are told, he met a pilgrim,[6] named Piron, returning into Normandy, who, having saluted the party, inquired if they had any message to send to their friends at home? "You may inform my people," was the duke's reply, "that you met me at this spot, carried by a legion of demons upon my way to Paradise." Then bidding farewell to the pilgrim, who laughed heartily at this compliment to the Moors, he bade his almoner give him a piece of silver to refresh him on the road.

Other characteristic traits, not less honourable, have been recorded of this prince. At a certain festival, during a collection for the poor, Robert observed an indigent knight deploring that he had nothing left to give. The prince privately handed to him a sum of money, which he instantly deposited in the plate. The monk soon after inquired if he had not made a mistake? "By no means," replied the knight, "I gave the exact sum." The duke, admiring the honest spirit of the poor knight, presented him with a sum equal to that which he had before given.[7]

Robert was not less distinguished for his affability and wit than for his magnificence. While at Constantinople,

[6] Generous to a fault, Robert assisted numbers of the poorer pilgrims, gave them escort, and paid their entrance into Jerusalem, placing them at the head of his train. His magnificence, with his offerings at the holy sepulchre, surpassed all that had been before witnessed. The governor is recorded to have held his character in such veneration that he ordered every facility to be afforded to his followers, and to the Christian pilgrims of all ranks. The example he held up was perhaps useful to generations of the poorer class of religious visitors at the holy shrine. It is also stated that he forwarded to the noble abbey of Cerizy, in Normandy, founded by himself, many highly prized reliques, purchased from the Patriarch.—Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie.

[7] Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

upon one occasion the emperor is said to have put these qualities to the test. He invited the duke to feast with him in his palace; but, when the hour arrived, took care to have all the tables and seats filled with guests, being curious to know how a prince, so distinguished for his courtesy, would act. When the duke and his companions entered, not one of the guests offered them the least accommodation, and they walked to an empty space at one end of the room. There the duke took off his splendid mantle, folded it with care, laid it upon the floor, and sat down; his example was imitated by his followers. In this position they dined; and the feast being ended, the duke and his knights rose, took leave of the company in the most graceful manner, and walked out of the hall in their doublets, leaving their rich cloaks behind them. The emperor, who had observed their whole behaviour, expressed his extreme surprise, and sent one of his courtiers to entreat that the duke would put on his cloak. "Return," said the Duke, "and tell your master that it is not the custom of the Normans to carry about with them the seats which they use at an entertainment."[8] "Could any thing," adds the historian, "be more delicate than this rebuke, or more noble, polite, and manly, than such a deportment?" It was such also as became a knight-pilgrim, as well as a prince.

Few details of much interest have been preserved respecting William's residence at the court of his guardian and lord paramount, Henry I. That his education, however, was carefully completed with the aid of the first masters, there is sufficient contemporary evidence

[8] J. Brompton; Chron. de Nor.; Henry Hist. of Britain.

to conclude.[9] If, at the early age of eight, he could read and explain Cæsar's Commentaries,[1] we may be assured that his future hours of study were not lost. During the two years' interval between his father's departure for the Holy Land and his death, William appears to have been brought up with the young French princes, and to have received instruction in the military schools, such as they then were, at Paris. He was surpassed by none of his youthful comrades, either in the varied accomplishments of feudal nobility, then wearing their newest gloss, or in extensive reading and sound study of the military art.

The intervals between his more serious pursuits were spent either in field sports, especially hawking and hunting, or in going through evolutions with the troops, of which he was remarkably fond. Sometimes also he would attend Henry's envoys in their missions to surrounding courts and states, and became instructed in that indispensable science for a statesman ruler, diplomacy.

The court of France was in the eleventh century the best academy, perhaps, in which a prince, born to rule, could obtain an extensive knowledge of mankind. It was the centre then, as now, of political intrigue; the European camp of feudal heroism; and the adventurous spirit of the sons of its nobles was scarcely exceeded by that of the Normans themselves, who were then ambitious of being considered "Frenchmen," and were so designated even subsequently to the Conquest. In Paris, therefore, William breathed the very atmosphere of knightly enterprise, while he stood aloof from the meaner intrigues and factions that might have perilled

[9] W. Pictaviensis; Chron. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; Henderson; Hayward.

[1] Ibid.

both life and honour in his own states.[2] A warm friend and as bitter an enemy, the young prince early displayed a keen sense of honour, soaring emulation, and a fiery energy, yet finely tempered by the dictates of a sound, unerring judgment. Nor was his physical temperament less favourable to the culture and development of his mental powers. He was temperate, active, assiduously eager in his inquiries and in the acquisition of fresh knowledge.

That his general conduct and deportment, combined with noble and affable manners, won the regard of the French monarch and the esteem of his barons, we have reason to infer from circumstances that subsequently occurred in his campaigns with Henry. How unwillingly the French engaged in a contest with him appeared from the emphatic reproach they addressed to their royal master after his defeat. That they equally rejoiced at becoming his allies, and conquering by his side, was evident upon many other occasions; and, though residing in a foreign court, he was still more popular in Normandy—a proof that he must have possessed something extraordinary in his character to impress the recollection of him so early upon all with whom he had come in contact.

The States preserved the fealty they had sworn to him, and the council of Regency, composed of Alan, duke of Brittany, Raoul de Gacé or de Vassy, the constable, the noble chiefs of the Montgomeries and De Beaumonts, were strenuous in resisting the torrent of violence and insubordination which threatened to subvert the government.[3]

[2] W. of Malms. ; Nouv. Hist. de Normandie ; Chron. de Nor. ; Mezerai ; Wace ; Robert of Gloucester ; Benois de St. More.

[3] Wace ; St. More ; W. Gemit. ; Chron. de Nor.

But already were heard the murmurs of the storm, directed by the aspiring genius and secret intrigues of his uncles and other relatives, which was destined soon to burst upon William's head. It was only the recollection of the signal services of duke Robert, and of the prudence and valour of his ancestors, the beneficent reign of Richard the Good, and the exploits of their founder, Rollo,[4] which still drew the affections of the Normans round the son of the princely pilgrim with the bonds both of a religious and heroic superstition, strengthened, perhaps, by the absence of the object of their regard.

Nor could the reputation of his ancestors fail to exercise a powerful influence over William's own mind. The fame of Rollo, the father of the Norman line, "familiar as household words" in the mouths of men, must have aroused aspiring hopes and wishes, when he heard how he had vanquished the armies of Charles[5] of

[4] These exploits were serious enough for all neighbouring nations; so much so that it was a petition inserted in the Litanies of different people who dreaded the depredations of these northern freebooters—"From the fury of the Normans, Good Lord deliver us!"—J. Brompt.; Nouv. Hist.

[5] The sole condition required by Charles the Simple from the Danish hero was that he should embrace the Christian faith; a condition as happy for himself as for his subjects. When invited to do homage to the King, as his lord paramount, by the usual mode of kissing the royal toe, Rollo repudiated the idea with infinite scorn. Upon its being insisted on, he turned to one of his officers and deputed him to perform the office; and so great was the rage even of the officer, at being driven to so humiliating an act, that he seized the royal leg, and, lifting it up to avoid stooping, threw Charles completely off his balance, amidst the loud laughter of the Danes. Rollo was contemporary with our great Alfred; made a descent upon England, and after ravaging the coasts was compelled to retire. He closed his adventures by making himself master of Brittany and Normandy, where he founded his dukedom. There he laid a firm foundation for his new dynasty and the succession of his posterity;—of that future empire which now extends its sway over every quarter of the

France, besieged him in his capital, and compelled him to cede part of his dominions, with the hand of a princess for his bride.

In the year 1035, while William was still pursuing his studies at the French court, came tidings of the death of duke Robert. This bereavement William must have felt both as a son and as a prince, in both relations being under the deepest obligations to the object of his regrets. There can be no question that this event had as marked an influence upon his conduct as upon his position and future fortunes. It was the signal for fresh outbreaks in Normandy, fomented by the late duke's relatives and legitimate aspirants to the ducal crown.[6]

Little amenable to authority of any kind, the turbulent barons began to arm their vassals. As jealous of each other as of William's delegated power, they fortified their castles, or joined the prevailing factions opposed to his government. A number of competitors soon appeared in the field, among whom William, earl of Arques,[7] the young duke's uncle, was one of the most

globe. From this fortunate chieftain—the sire of many a royal stem, as well as of that of England—there descended six dukes of Normandy, in a direct line, who bore sway during 120 years previously to the conquest of England. These were all distinguished in their day. Their names were William I.; Richard I.; Richard II.; Richard III; Robert I., father of the Conqueror.—Nouv. Hist. de Normandie; Duchesne.

[6] It is the general opinion, founded upon contemporary authorities, that Robert died upon his way from the Holy Land; most probably when he had reached Nicea, in Bithynia, worn out less by age than previous anxiety and his early wars. A story was propagated that he had been poisoned, and, still more absurdly, that his pilgrimage had been undertaken to appease his remorse for having been instrumental in causing the death of his brother, duke Richard III.—Chron. de Normandie; Nouvelle Hist.; W. Gemit.

[7] This powerful aspirant to the dukedom was brother to Mauger the

formidable. There were also Guy of Burgundy, the counts of Mortaine and Eu, and, the most distinguished of all allied to the ducal house—Roger de Toni, renowned for his campaigns in Italy and Spain, who was the first to raise the banner against the Regency. In this exigency, Alan of Brittany, the grand seneschal, hastened to the scene of action, with the hope of preserving order and establishing William in the ducal seat. Unfortunately, a fatal accident at Vimoutiers terminated at once his expedition and his life; an event which enabled earl Roger to mature his plans and induced him to make an immediate and rapid advance upon the capital.

It was at this juncture that the pilgrim knights of the cross, having performed the last offices to their princely leader, arrived from the Holy Land. They found their country a prey to violence and faction, and their master's beloved heir still absent at a foreign court,[8] in the power as well as under the tutelage of a jealous and wily relative. It was only the dread he entertained of the Norman power which prevented his perpetrating the tragedy afterwards enacted by King John, and in nothing does the fortune of William appear more conspicuous, as compared with the ill-fated Arthur, than that, in circumstances of even greater peril, he should have escaped free and scathless from the hands of his ambitious guardians.

prelate, by whom he was supported. Guy of Burgundy, and Robert's other relatives, including King Henry of France, were soon emboldened to advance their pretensions, on the ground of inheriting from the sisters or aunts of the deceased duke. The future Conqueror's own claim to the English crown was founded upon a similar kind of relationship.—Ord. Vital.; W. of Malms.; Chron. de Nor.; St. More.

[8] Duchesne; Chron. de Normandie; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

The faithful companions and counsellors of Robert lost no time in joining the council of regency, and representing the necessity that existed for the instant presence of the young duke. Proposals to this effect were consequently made to Henry as his lord paramount, to which we shall again have occasion to allude. The mutual aggressions of the barons continued to aggravate the evils of a disputed succession, while the absent heir was too young to dictate terms to his aspiring enemies.

Meanwhile, the council of regency had difficulty in warding off the danger of foreign invasion, in addition to the calamities of civil strife and dissension. The laws of duke Robert were no longer respected; the voice of justice and reason was no more heard; and fears were entertained, from the delays thrown in the way of William's return, of the trustworthiness of the French king. Secret projects were already concerting with his enemies, and the council, to avert the approaching storm, called an assembly of the prelates and barons in the young duke's name. The attendance was only partial, and the number of powerful leaders who kept aloof proved the extent of the danger which was hourly increasing.

At this "great council," however, the first held in William's reign, it was resolved to insist more peremptorily upon the restoration of the royal ward to his people and his capital, in order to give authority to the edicts of his government. Another embassy was despatched, with conditions to which Henry considered it most politic to accede. This bold and judicious measure was especially well-timed; for, in a very brief

period, there would have been little chance of the young heir obtaining his personal liberty, as events soon made it appear.

Forgetting all obligations to his relative, the late duke, Henry's ambition betrayed itself in a more open manner, when William was removed from under his eye, and he blamed himself for having too easily complied with the demands of the council. But Henry, with all his love of intrigue and his ambition, was of a weak and vacillating character, while his ward, endowed with qualities, if not directly the reverse, yet of a loftier order, soon availed himself of his knowledge of the king's weakness, as a stepping-stone to his own aggrandisement. Henry, on his part, sought to retrieve his error by delaying the recognition of the young duke's title, and renewed his intrigues with his adversaries. A crisis was near at hand.

The germs of the feudal system had already spread widely throughout France and Normandy. A graduated scale of military vassalage, by tenure of service, was tending to produce a sort of grand national police of the most formidable kind; a power afterwards so well understood by William, and fostered to its utmost perfection. At that time, however, its rising energies, both in France and in Normandy, were all directed against him; and, wielded by a stronger will and greater talents than Henry possessed, must have effected the speedy re-conquest of Normandy at a juncture so favourable for such an attempt. But William's star was in the ascendant; and early experience and perils taught the heir of duke Robert how to turn their most formidable weapons against the

breasts of his assailants.[9] His skill and daring supplied the want of means to curb those fiery and unruly barons, who defied his power, and whose conflicts exhausted the strength of his dominions.[1]

Among the most turbulent of these petty despots ranked Vauquelin lord of Terriers, and Huet de Montford. Their reply to William's summons in council was highly characteristic of the state of his government, and of the times in which these "lords of misrule" flourished. "They declined," they observed with the most insulting coolness, "to take part in any other person's quarrels till they had settled their own." This declaration of independence must have convinced William that he had many a sharp conflict to encounter before he could dictate terms to spirits so turbulent. It was equally clear that his aspiring relatives had taught their vassals and retainers to regard his title to the ducal crown with indifference or contempt.

Nor were these baronial wars only a conflict of open force; recourse was had to fraud and even assassination, and more than one of William's faithful adherents paid the penalty of his fidelity with his blood. His own friend and preceptor, who had accompanied him on his return into Normandy, was almost the first of these victims.[2] To such an extreme was the violence of faction carried, when fomented by foreign intrigues and rival claims, that Gilbert de Crespin, his father's friend and counsellor, did not escape; and Osberne de Cres-

[9] Mezerai; Wace; Thierry; Sismondi, Lyttleton; Sir W. Temple; Hallam; Palgrave, Rise and Progress, &c. [1] Ibid.

[2] He was named Theroulde from the place of his birth. He had been long in the service of king Henry, was intrusted with the military education of his ward, and, unfortunately for himself, appointed to escort him back into Normandy.—Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

pin, once the seneschal, and governor of the town of Theroulde, was unable to protect his own life. He was despatched in his bed by a brother of the celebrated Roger de Montgomery, while in retaliation his provost,[3] burning to avenge his lord, gained access to Montgomery's apartment at the head of his retainers, and put both the assassin and his accomplices to death. The powerful houses of Bellesme and Alençon pushed their enmity to the most revolting lengths, while their knights and vassals, as if privileged by military tenure, vied with the feudal atrocities of their lieges upon a minor scale.[4] Rising towns became the prey of the castles; and the burghers tax-paying serfs to every feudal lord of the hour.

In vain William's council attempted to put a stop to this insolent defiance of the ducal government; nor was it till the hero himself was enabled to take the field that outrage, rapine, and sedition were put down by a stronger arm. He was yet scarcely in his fifteenth year; and many of the more moderate and best disposed among the barons had left their castles in disgust, and joined the Norman campaigners in Italy or against the Saracens in Spain.[5] In this service the young nobility of Normandy were accustomed to flesh their maiden swords, before the banners of the cross had yet waved over the plains of Palestine, and popes and hermits had preached the holiness of religious wars.

About this period the death of Alan III., duke of Brittany,[6] left vacant the office of constable of Nor-

[3] Named Barnan de Glos.

[4] W. Pict; Orderic Vit.; Wace; St. More.

[5] Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist.; Vie de Guiscard; Ord. Vital.; P. Pictaviensis.

[6] Brittany, it should be remembered, was a sort of ducal fief, held of

mandy, which, with that of regent in the minority of Conan II., was intrusted to the able and faithful De Gacé. This distinguished warrior as well as statesman had been appointed guardian to several young princes, and acquitted himself with equal judgment and fidelity of his onerous and delicate charge. He was son of the celebrated archbishop Robert, who rose to high distinction in the reign of William's father, and, as count d'Evreux, espoused the rich heiress Heloine, by whom he had several sons, who displayed all the fiery courage of their prelatical sire.[7] Subsequently to the decease of Theroulde he had been appointed military tutor of the young duke, and was assiduous in promoting his studies, and showing him by example the application of those rules of conduct of which he had heard and read.

On the sudden death of his friend and fellow-soldier, the duke of Brittany, while leading an army to William's succour, he hurried in person to oppose Earl Roger, but found his faction too deeply rooted to yield to his most strenuous efforts. He was compelled to act on the defensive, and garrison the few strong places which continued faithful. His haughty enemy affected to regard the illegitimate scion of Rollo's stem with extreme disdain, priding himself at the same time upon his own honourable descent from that great founder of the ducal race. Stung to the quick to perceive that his claims were passed over by the "grand council" and

the Norman dukes, and was bound to afford military aid, as well as to do homage by its feudal tenure. It was different with regard to France and Normandy; the suzerainship in the crown of the former did not extend to the Norman dukes as to the other feudal princes, who held of the crown; nor were they compelled to attend the king of France in his wars with a body of troops whenever he should require them.—Dudon de St. Quentin; Hist. Ang. Gest. Gul. Normannorum, p. 872. [7] Ibid.

barons of the realm, after his signal exploits, he was also surprised on his return to find himself deprived of the authority which he had formerly exercised in the councils of the deceased duke. Being possessed of immense wealth, he soon collected an army of free-booters, with which he levied contributions upon his neighbours, laid waste the surrounding territories, and, following up his successes, he now aimed at nothing less than the ducal crown.[8]

Fortunately for William, his enemy's great rival, Dupray des Vieux of Beaumont, declared in his favour, and deputed his son Roger, already famed in arms, to oppose his namesake at the head of his troops and vassals. Arriving suddenly at the seat of danger, young Beaumont attacked the proud pretender, routed his mercenary army, and slew him with his own hand.[9] It is, however, reported that the constable De Gacé arrived most opportunely during the battle, and thus contributed to give the death-blow at once to the pretender and to the conspiracy which he had organised.

The name of De Beaumont becomes conspicuous from this period in the Norman and English annals. In conjunction with De Gacé, Fitzosberne, and the Montgomeries, the only remaining props of William's state, Roger pursued his success; and their services were afterwards rewarded with many a broad English manor. It is stated that, in commemoration of his signal good fortune, the victor founded the abbey of Priaux in 1038; and he was subsequently chosen president of William's council, and regent during his absence in Brittany, England, and France. Other abbeys may have been

[8] Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Wace; Thierry; Sismondi; W. Pict.; Mezerai; Nouv. Hist. de Nor. [9] Ibid.

erected in honour of other victories, and it is probable that to this commemorative spirit we may owe some of those many splendid monuments, the ruins of which are yet to be seen in Normandy.[1]

No sooner was one of the duke's enemies disposed of than another appeared in the field. The French monarch secretly intriguing with the malcontents, next resolved to take advantage of William's troubles, and prevent the consolidation of his power in the outset. With this view he summoned the duke to attend him, and do homage at Evreux; a requisition which his council, perceiving that he was in no position to declare his independence, advised him to obey. He was then not more than fifteen, but he went attended by a splendid retinue, to impose the respect which his youthful age might fail to exact, and it had the desired result. Henry, whatever were his real views, had not the temerity to violate the feudal laws existing between the lord suzerain and head vassal, strengthened by the obligations of feudal usages, then in force, and of a royal guardian's hospitality. But he assumed the tone of a dictator rather than of a protector, and received his ward with marked displeasure.[2] "I am little pleased, young sir," began the king, "with your new fortress at Tellières; its garrison is continually making incursions into my territories." William expressed his regret, "if it were so." "If so or not, you must give it up," was the haughty sovereign's reply, "that I may level it with the ground. It is you who must give the order, and follow me instantly!"

[1] Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Ducariel.

[2] Mezerai; Wace; W. of Malms.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Piet.

We may imagine the feelings of the boy-duke at this command. Accustomed to comply with the injunctions of his guardian, and taken by surprise, we can hardly wonder that, so circumstanced, he complied with the royal mandate. However reluctantly, he gave the required orders; but its governor, the valiant De Crespin, refused to surrender the place. It had been confided to him, a sacred trust, by the late duke Robert, who little anticipated that the royal guardian into whose hands he had committed his only son, and who was indebted to him for his throne, would be the first to summon and raze it with the ground.

In this dilemma, William appealed to his council, and, to assuage the anger of the incensed monarch, the orders were reiterated, and the fortress was destroyed. The young prince, happy to regain his liberty, even at such a price, took a formal leave of his lord suzerain, and returned to his castle at Falaise.[3]

William did not soon forget a scene so characteristic of Henry's duplicity, and events soon afforded him an opportunity of taking ample revenge, and in the manner most humiliating to the pride of Henry, by magnanimously sparing the wreck of his beaten armies. This interview, which took place in 1039, evinced the jealousy with which the king viewed the progress of his ward, his high promise, and his love of military distinction. Add to all this the recent successes of William's commanders, which threatened more important conse-

[3] Though present in Normandy from the year 1037, William had not yet assumed the reins of government, or appeared in the field. He did not formally assume the ducal crown till about 1040, when he also first encountered the overwhelming numbers of the French, headed, too, by a French monarch in person.—Chron. de Nor.

quences. The council of regency, indignant at so wanton a display of the sovereign power—at variance alike with feudal law and usage—remonstrated, but in vain. Henry replied by marching a powerful army into the county of Hyêmes, devastating the country, and giving up the city of Argentau to the flames. William's council began too late to repent the concession they had made to him, by delivering up the frontier fortresses; while his barons, irritated at these sacrifices, derided his youthful inexperience, and repudiated the idea of submission to a sovereign basely born, and not yet out of his minority.

Some extraordinary event alone could retrieve William's fortunes at this trying juncture, and, as if to give an earnest of the brilliant destiny that awaited him, it now came to his aid. Toustain de Gois, Count of Hyêmes threw himself at this crisis into Falaise[4] at the head of a strong force, while his native district lay ravaged by fire and sword. Foiled in his grand object, Henry had recourse to stratagem, and attempted to corrupt the fidelity of its governor by promises so liberal that the count could no longer resist, and fell into the snare. Before he could deliver up the castle, however, the brave De Gacé, by his promptness, once

[4] This ancient capital of the dukes of Normandy, already described, was situated in the most central part of the duchy; and its magnificent fortress, in its then state, was considered almost impregnable. It presented a point of union in every dangerous emergency, and it was there that William concentrated his forces for his most distant and perilous expeditions. Its capture at such a moment must have decided the fate of the campaign, and perhaps of Normandy itself. For, in the face of so many competitors, Henry would doubtless have annexed it to the French monarchy, and obtained that glory which was reserved for his more fortunate successor, Philip Augustus.

more, even at the eleventh hour, turned the scale of fortune in William's favour.

These singular examples of a sudden revolution in William's affairs, when upon the very brink of destruction, may be remarked throughout the whole of his subsequent career. He now accompanied the veteran De Gacé for the first time at the head of a select body of his Normans, and arrived just in time to prevent the consummation of the count's treachery. The siege was raised, and no sooner was William recognised, clad in complete armour, by the side of his faithful seneschal and tutor in war, before the castle which had given him birth, than he was hailed with shouts of acclamation both from the garrison and the town. They beheld the son of duke Robert, to whom they had sworn allegiance before his departure for the Holy Land; and they now saw him betrayed by a corrupt guardian and by faithless vassals. The governor, in alarm for his own safety, could with difficulty prevent the inhabitants from throwing open the gates; and the moment a breach was made, they rose and compelled the garrison to surrender. The unhappy count, aware that his guilt was known, threw himself at the feet of the young duke, whose first exploit was not tarnished by a want of magnanimity. He spared the count's life, but justly banished him, and confiscated his property.

From this epoch,[5] soon after he had been knighted by the French king, with all those feudal ceremonies peculiar to the time, the military reputation of William takes its rise. He now felt more confidence in the

[5] Namely, 1039 or 1040, about the period when William first assumed the reins of government, and commenced his campaigns.

position which he occupied, and in the influence which had arrested the haughty French monarch in his treacherous career. His noble deportment and affable manners completed the *prestige* of his easy and bloodless victory. His calm and serious aspect, his self-possession, his eager inquiries and just remarks, gave high promise of those statesmanlike qualities and rare talents which he soon displayed. The inhabitants vied with each other in celebrating his return; and contemporary chroniclers dwell upon this period of his career as forming the groundwork of his distinction, and bringing his more brilliant qualities into fuller view. "From the manner," says one of them,[6] "in which the young duke William did comport himself in *this virtuous trial*, he was ever afterwards held in good esteem and well reputed of."

Attended by his faithful seneschal, William lost no time in prosecuting his first success. The king lay encamped between the towns of Argentau and Hyêmes; but on the young duke's approach he had recourse to his usual arts, and offered to negotiate. By the advice of his council, approved by De Gacé, the duke consented, and again reaped the fruits of battle without its risks. And it is worth noticing that, throughout all his future campaigns, he never engaged an enemy when he could possibly avoid it, or attain his object by other means.

Henry consented to evacuate the towns he had taken, with the exception of the fortress of Tellières, and it was during the retreat of the French monarch that William celebrated his peaceful triumph by formally assuming the ducal crown. The ceremony took place in his recovered capital, surrounded by the prelates and barons

[6] Duchesne; Chron. de Nor., in Mazeres; Hearne; W. Piet.

still faithful to his cause. Nor, young as he was, did the heir of duke Robert appear unequal to a dignity, the lofty duties of which it was his ambition to discharge. Some of his first acts showed that he was disposed to rule with justice and even clemency. He recalled from banishment the repentant lord of Hyêmes, in consideration of the noble conduct of his son,[7] to whom the duke was ever afterwards strongly attached.

The same conciliatory policy led him to confer the archiepiscopal see of Rouen upon one of his uncles,[8] by the advice of his great council in 1041. But this high dignitary soon showed himself more turbulent and overbearing than even his predecessor, the celebrated Robert. He had the presumption to employ his powerful influence in promoting the disloyal views of his own brother, the Earl of Arques. This noble, the brother of the late duke, spurned the honours conferred upon him by William, and, breaking out into open rebellion, declared that he would support his title to the succession, though it were to the death.[9] He advanced it as the legitimate heir of his father, Richard the Good, next in succession to duke Robert, while that of his nephew, though derived

[7] Richard, son of Toustain Count d'Hyêmes, was rewarded for his signal services with the confidence of his prince. William, as a mark of his esteem, restored the father to his family honours, with an exception of some portion of the county, which he settled upon his mother, Arlette, after her marriage with Herlain of Canterville.

[8] This was the notorious prelate Mauger, whose ingratitude to William, and whose flagitious conduct, combined with an eccentricity bordering upon madness, sullied the lustre of his uncommon talent. So wild did he at length become, that the people thought him possessed with a demon, and the duke was compelled finally to strip him of his ill-worn honours, in favour of Lanfranc.

[9] Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie ; Duchesne ; Chron. de Nor. ; Orderic Vitalis.

from the elder branch, could not be placed in competition, as he was only the spurious offspring of Robert's mistress Arlette.

The juncture seemed not unfavourable to the bold earl's enterprise. The strange disappearance of William's tutor and companion in arms, De Gacé,[1] was a circumstance to be deplored. He is no more seen or heard of in the busy drama of William's life; but, though deprived of his right arm in war, the youthful hero was not the less true to himself. With admirable promptitude and vigour he advanced to the seat of danger, where a single error in judgment, or the least false step, must have thrown victory into the scale of his adversary, and consigned the future "Conquerer" to irretrievable ignominy and neglect. The French king, also, was preparing to join the haughty earl; yet William's courage and determination rose with the urgency of the occasion. Fortune refuses few favours to the wise and the brave. By a bold movement he struck at the heart of his enemy's power; and appeared before his strongest fortress before he was supposed to have taken the field.

The earl had constructed a formidable tower, well garrisoned, upon the rocky pinnacle of the castle, so as to render the place almost impregnable. Thence he

[1] The absence of the seneschal De Gacé at this eventful crisis gave rise to suspicions that he had come unfairly by his end. It is asserted by several of the old chroniclers that he was secretly taken off by William's enemies, but his death was never satisfactorily accounted for. If he did not fall a victim to assassination, or in battle—an event which would surely have been noticed in some of the Norman chronicles—it is very possible that he may have followed in the steps of his former master, duke Robert, and gone on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, then a favourite mode of retiring from the bustle of an active professional career.

sounded the tocsin of war in the ears of his warlike vassals; the surrounding district, difficult of access, and guarded at every step, rose in his cause, while the French king was hastening to support him.

Nothing daunted, William sent an order to his rebel uncle summoning him to appear at Rouen and do homage for his county; and then, leaving a force under earl Guiffard to continue the siege, he marched with a select body of his Normans to effect a diversion against the French in the vicinity of Valognes. The duke and his gallant followers are described as setting out on this expedition to encounter the veteran chivalry of France, led by the monarch and his great barons, with all the eagerness of boon companions proceeding to some joyous festival. Having first cut off the king's communication with the castle, he had recourse to one of those stratagems for which he became so celebrated, and laid a strong ambuscade in the depths of the adjacent valley, along which Henry was pursuing his route to relieve his ally. Upon either side were lofty acclivities thickly covered with woods; and into this vast defile the van of the French army advanced. This consisted chiefly of battle-axes and pikes. In the right wing, bodies of Germans were intermixed with the French. In the left, fought the men of Anjou and of Poitou; and then followed a large escort with the baggage, and "an innumerable train," we are told, "of scullions, cooks, carters, and other base drudges," the royal commissariat of that day. Next to this convoy, which he was anxious to protect, marched the monarch himself, with his main battle, consisting of the most valiant knights and worthy gentlemen bravely mounted, while the lancers and men-at-arms closed the rear.

The young duke, more effectually to draw Henry into his toils, deployed a small detachment to face the enemy, which, after making a feigned attack, had orders to turn and fly; a feint nearly resembling that afterwards practised with such signal success at Hastings. Thus decoyed, the French fell completely into the snare. When they were well advanced into the valley, the Norman bowmen discharged their feathered lances from the hills on both sides. This attack William followed up with his men-at-arms, supported by a small body of horse, and the carnage was great. The French van being well commanded, drew up in the form of a wedge, and a portion of it, preserving compact order, succeeded in cutting its way till it reached the summit of a hill where it encamped.

But the main body was not so fortunate; the right wing was almost wholly destroyed; the left was driven back upon the rear; and the destruction caused in its flight spared the young victor half the work of slaughter. Next rushed on the knights and nobles of France to restore the battle, but they were met with the same storm of arrows from the hill sides. Their horses, galled with the barbed points, were thrown into confusion; and the dust and light sand which they raised, blown full in the faces of the French, involved them all in one dark cloud, which deprived them of the power of action. While they were in this wretched plight, the Normans descended from the hills, and, "coming to close encounter with battle-axe and sword, made great havoc among their enemies."

Had William possessed numbers at all proportioned to those of the French, he might have surrounded and taken them prisoners; for he compared them

to deer in a toil; and it was indeed a true hunter's stratagem which he had employed. But, aware that with his small force he could not utterly vanquish and destroy them, William, with a policy rare at his age, when his Normans were weary of slaughter, assumed the merit of forbearance as a ground of reconciliation when he should find it expedient to propose it.[2]

The French king retreated by the way he came; and, when he encamped for the night, surrounded by his broken masses, not only did his nobles reproach him, "but the rudest of his soldiers did boldly upbraid the king with this misfortune." One asked him where his vanguard was—where his wings—where were the residue of his battle and rereward? Others demanded if he had any more mousetraps to lead them into, and when? Others called for the carriages to preserve those in life who had not been slain. But most sat heavy and pensive, scarce accounting themselves among the living.[3]

[2] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Hayward, Lives; Chron. de Nor.; W. Gemit.

[3] "While the French expected every moment to be again assailed, and no man saw anything but death and despair, behold a messenger came from the duke, not to offer but to desire peace, and to crave protection of the French king according to the trust which Robert, the duke's father, reposed in him. Peace was signed, and protection assured in a more ample manner than it was required. Then the messenger with many good words appeased the king's heaviness, telling him that his vanguard was safe, his carriages not touched, and that he should be furnished with horses, both for burden and draught, instead of those that had been slain.

"These words, as a sweet enchantment, ravished the French king with sudden joy. But when they came to gather up their baggage, a spectacle both lamentable and loathsome was presented unto them. The valley covered with dead bodies; many of them not touched with any weapon, lay trod to death, or stifled with dust and sand; the wounded overlaid with the slain that they were unable to free themselves; towards whom it is memorable what manly both pity and help the Normans did afford. And so the French king, more by courtesy of his enemies than

"The King submitted to all these reproaches with a sad silence; sometimes he dissembled as though he had not heard, and at others he would faintly answer, 'Good words, good soldiers; have patience awhile and all will be well'."[4] He was indebted upon this occasion to the ostensible magnanimity and moderation, but in truth to the real policy, of his conqueror for the escape of his army, a policy which, it will be seen, soon resulted in William's own advantage. In this spirited action many prisoners of rank fell into his hands; these he set free without ransom. Enguerraud, Count of Abbéville, was slain, and another malcontent, Hugh Beaudoin, remained a captive.[5]

The siege of Arques was continued with the utmost vigour; but during the temporary absence of William, who was compelled to repair to Rouen, a party of mercenaries, at the instigation of the French King, at length succeeded in throwing succours into the place. This inveterate hostility upon the part of his lord paramount and former guardian would have led to the submission of a less determined character. Learning that the King was again advancing with reinforcements, after rejecting the honourable conditions proposed to him, he appeared for some moments lost in thought,[6] then in the emphatic words of his historian,[7] "he first began to know himself, and to devote his mind to war in earnest as one covetous only of honour." He forthwith called for his fleetest steed, for he was far distant from his

either by courage or discretion of his own, returned in reasonable state to Paris."—Hayward, Lives, &c.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham.

[4] Hayward, Lives; Abbé Prévost; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

[5] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

[6] Abbé Prévost; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; W. Malms.; W. Pict.

[7] Ibid.

camp. "Let those who love me," was his brief charge, "now follow me!" and, putting spurs to his horse, attended by a few of his bravest knights, he scarcely drew bit till he had reached the barriers of Port Andemer. There he mounted another charger, and proceeded to rejoin his army before Arques, after traversing the districts of Le Véez, Bayeux, and Caen, a distance of more than eighteen leagues, and having outridden, we are assured, the most eager of his gallant adherents.

William's sudden appearance and address had a magical effect upon the bold besiegers. There was nothing too daring for them to attempt; for like all great leaders he possessed the art of transfusing his own spirit into the breasts of his least intrepid followers.

The air rang with acclamations as he first uttered that memorable oath so often repeated amidst the perils of his eventful career, while he stood uncovered, surrounded by his knights and vassals: "By the splendour of God, I swear never to depart from this spot until the strong place of Arques shall be in my power!" —a terrific oath, responded to by all, and which quickly decided the fate of his powerful rival.[8]

From the summit of his castle-tower, till this time deemed impregnable, whence he had cast defiance, and hurled back all assailants into the defiles below, that rival now beheld the animated scene we have just described. Soon the stern array of war was seen slowly winding its way in densely serried ranks. A deep silence had succeeded to the exulting shouts which he had before heard; he paused and trembled, and so

[8] Wace; Thierry; Sismondi; W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.

unusual was the terror which struck into that bold earl's heart, as the assailants drew nigh, that, in the hope of allaying William's wrath, he hoisted a flag of truce, and sent terms of capitulation to avert the menaced assault.[9] This was the third time in which the formidable aspect and admirable discipline of William's Normans had terrified his enemies into submission, without striking a blow. The rapid progress of his affairs, from the moment he led his army in person, is a remarkable proof that he had already improved upon the example set him by men like Rollo de Gacé, and Roger de Beaumont, his first tutors in the field.

Scorning to treat with his ungrateful and rebel uncle, William insisted upon his unqualified submission. So indignant did he feel at his treachery, in having invited the French king to ravage his dominions, that he would probably have proceeded to extremities, had not the intercession of De Beaumont and his friends prevented his committing so great an error. The moment he became cool, he saw his true policy, and, reproaching himself, with that extraordinary command over his passions which he could exert on all great occasions, he thanked his faithful counsellors. It was then urged that if he took the Earl alive, he would be expected to make an example of him, to deter other traitors and pretenders to the succession. Feeling how much he wanted support against so formidable an adversary as the French king, William replied that it was neither his wish nor his policy to punish his great barons with severity. Having already secured more than one powerful adherent by his politic clemency, he aimed at obtaining such a reputation for generosity and mag-

[9] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham.

nanimity as might render him popular alike in the eyes of his vassals and his people.[1] Means therefore were devised to facilitate the rebel earl's escape, too happy, doubtless, to have thus evaded the consequences of his treasonable practices, his broken faith, and his daring efforts to wrest the ducal sceptre from William's hands. He first sought refuge at the French court; his estates were confiscated, and his castles were all surrendered to his young and fortunate rival.

A temporary peace with Henry was the result of this splendid success, for he dreaded to meet William's army, now flushed with a victory unattended by any loss. The unhappy earl, however, not having held out to extremities, met with that cool reception due to unsuccessful treachery. If he had really been appointed a joint guardian of William, with his brother and the French king, as some authorities assert, this was only a further aggravation of his guilt. He was thus justly punished by the son for the breach of honour and faith committed against the father and the brother. He had violated a sacred trust, with the additional enormity of having brought upon his country the calamity of a foreign invader, in the person of its most formidable and insidious foe.[2]

The society of disappointed traitors is seldom agreeable even to each other; and the Earl of Arques found himself neglected, both by the monarch and his nobles. He soon afterwards withdrew from Paris and repaired to Boulogne, where he entered into the service of Earl Eustace, a great military adventurer.

William, having equally foiled the intrigues and

[1] Wace; Walsingham; Mazeres; W. Pict.; Chron. de Nor.

[2] Thierry; Sismondi; W. Gemit.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

repelled the arms of the French monarch, returned in triumph to celebrate his victories in his native city. The reputation of his early success daunted for a time the wavering and turbulent barons, and intrigue and conspiracy, retreating from the light, feared to raise the banner of revolt, without the aid of some foreign power. His military renown had not only the effect of checking the spirit of dissension at home; it commanded the respect of surrounding princes, effaced the stain of birth, and pleaded a title stronger than that deduced from legitimate succession, or from the adoption of his father the late duke.

CHAPTER II.

Results of William's early campaigns—His moderate use of power—He issues a general amnesty—Arbitrates between his turbulent lords—His early love of order and discipline—Their good effects—He visits his different states—His inquiries into their government and resources—Cultivates amity with his neighbours—Alarming conspiracy—His narrow escape—Perilous adventures—The confederated barons take the field—The duke compelled to act on the defensive—He retreats—Induced to seek aid from the king of France—Bold and magnanimous resolve—Places himself in Henry's power—Obtains his alliance and support—Is joined by a French army headed by the king—Marches to give battle to the insurgents—Sanguinary engagement—Victory of William—Number of prisoners—His clemency and generosity—Pursues the Count of Burgundy—Takes him prisoner—Restores his estates—Attaches him to his interests—Complete suppression of the insurrection—Excellent measures adopted by the Duke—Rising power and prosperity of Normandy—His enlightened government—High reputation—Beloved by his army—Respected by the people—His strict execution of the laws—Dreaded by the great barons and their vassals—Razes their strongholds and completes his conquest—Many insurgents withdraw into Sicily and Italy.

From the period when William assumed the reins of government, and commenced his brilliant successes, repeated during the campaigns which took place between 1040 and 1045, the Norman laws were again administered with some degree of impartiality and vigour. Armed with the authority derived from the councils of the state, both civil and ecclesiastical, as well as with the military power, he succeeded for a time in repressing those wild and daring acts of insubordination which had led to the most fatal results. Violence, rapine, and assassination no longer insulted the face of open

day, dissolved the ties of society, and defied the ducal government as well as the local authorities of the districts and states.[3]

Still keeping in view the conciliatory policy he had laid down, as recommended by De Gacé, De Beaumont, and the late duke's best counsellors, William published a general amnesty, and invited the still existing factions to take advantage of his clemency. He offered likewise to become legal arbitrator in the feuds of some of the great barons, and sought to secure the fidelity of his powerful relatives and legitimate pretenders by the most generous policy, accompanied with profuse grants and honours.

One of the conditions in his amnesty shows the attention which he thus early paid to that system of discipline and subordination so conducive to the establishment of the feudal power, and afterwards widely diffused throughout his dominions. "Be it known that barons, knights, vassals, and all other Normans, shall lay down their arms and not make use of them till necessary to defend their own hearths and homes."[4] Another of his objects was to give stability to his government by encouraging arts and industry in the cities, and a love of local residence, as a check upon foreign adventure, especially upon the inclination of the young nobility and knights to engage in the campaigns of Southern Italy and Spain; a measure which shows that he had views of aggrandisement nearer home. The other provisions were calculated, with equal wisdom, to repair the evils

[3] Ord. Vital.; W. of Malms.; Sir W. Temple; Intro. Littleton; Henry; Lingard; Brodie; Alison.

[4] Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie; Laws of duke William; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne, Hist. de Nor.

caused by a depopulating civil war, and to extend and consolidate the resources of the country by promoting commerce, public buildings, and free ports.[5]

The good effects of this amnesty were soon perceptible, and his subsequent endeavours in the capital and in his visits to different districts to restore the country to its allegiance, were far more effectual than all the edicts of his former regency. The councils, consisting of the special council of his chief prelates and barons, and the general council or assembly of the States, composed of deputies and notables from the cities, were the next objects of his inquiry; and he was soon engaged in those statistical estimates which he subsequently carried to such perfection in his registry of national property in England. So far from indulging his warlike genius, he sought to maintain peace with the adjacent States, and contemporary authorities agree in describing him at this period as a prince of the loftiest promise.[6]

The early development of mind and action forced upon William by circumstances had made him a precocious soldier and statesman. His natural qualities, his habits and education, had also excited in him a chivalrous daring, tempered with singular judgment, to which he united those enlarged ideas of government, which indicated that he was formed to accomplish greater things.[7]

[5] Walsingham; W. of Malms.; Annals of Normandy.

[6] From 1042 to 1050. Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.

[7] The duke was at this time in the twentieth year of his age. His figure was above the middle size; his features were manly; his deportment dignified. He was extremely affable and agreeable in conversation. So great was his strength that he could string a bow on horseback which no other could bend.

Having, with the aid of his newly-summoned councils and his military vassals, established his ducal power, it was his next object to render it permanent by the advantages of foreign alliance. With the policy of an older statesman, he temporised with the intriguing Henry, and cultivated the friendship of those princes who, jealous of that monarch, would be likely, in case of need, to afford him their aid. But, in the midst of these pacific labours, he was suddenly recalled to the field by a danger more imminent than any that he had yet encountered, involving not only his dominions but his life. Singular good fortune alone, combined with the utmost courage and decision, could avert the fatal blow prepared for him. Such was the source of this foul conspiracy; such the secresy with which it was carried on, and the character of its authors, that no wisdom could have penetrated, no prudence have guarded against it. The head of it was not only his relative, but the friend and companion of his youth—Guy of Burgundy, whom he had enriched with broad domains, and decorated with all the honours which it was in his power to bestow.[8]

Intoxicated, perhaps, with his newly-acquired power, Guy advanced his claims as the son of Alice, daughter of duke Richard II., and aunt to William, and entered into a conspiracy with Niel or Nielle, lord of the Cotentin, Ranulph, Viscount of Bayonne, and other malcontents. Undeterred by the failure of similar attempts, he had the presumption to imagine that the glory of over-

[8] William is believed to have conferred upon him the government of two counties, with their castles; the feudal appanages of Brione and Vernon, in addition to various baronial titles conferred upon him for his services in the field.—Ord. Vit.; W. Gemit.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham; Continuation of St. Quentin.

throwing the son of duke Robert had been reserved for him, firmly seated as he now was in the confidence and admiration of his warlike Normans. The conspiracy had extensive means; but openly to rally under his banner the vassals of Brione and of Vernon would have been fatal to his cause. It was only by a combination of secret violence and fraud that he could hope for the consummation of his atrocious plot.

Grenoult du Plessis, another lord of the powerful district of Cotentin, joined the new league, and became the bosom counsellor of the wily and ungrateful pretender.[9] The rude and remote district in which his castles were situated, between Carentan and Coutances, was well adapted for the "secret haunt of black conspiracy," and it became the rendezvous of William's enemies of all ranks. Over this guilty conclave presided the demon of foreign intrigue, intestine discord, hatred, and revenge. The relatives of Du Plessis and the Count de Bayeux, then engaged in hostilities with each other, were invited to add their names to the sanguinary list. Terms commensurate with so great a risk were offered them if they would abandon their own quarrels, and combine their forces against duke William. These were accepted, and the rival barons joined the infamous league. William, who had taken active measures to suppress the last efforts of dissension in the Cotentin, repaired to Valognes, as it is asserted by some writers, upon a hunting excursion.

[9] This infamous lord of the Cotentin is stated in the old chronicles to have been a descendant—and a worthy one—of the renowned traitor and buffoon, Ganellon, who proved such a thorn in the sides of Charlemagne, and played so many fantastic tricks with his Paladins. "When Roland, Brave, and Oliver," with many another peer, had cause to rue their acquaintance with the cunning and craven knight.

On his arrival, however, he had the satisfaction to learn that the belligerents had laid down their arms, and he prepared to return to Rouen. Their knowledge of the duke's approach was the signal for the conspirators to throw off the mask, and consummate their treachery with the dagger. They hastened, one by one, to avoid exciting suspicion, to the town of Bayeux, in the hope of cutting off his return. Having surrounded him at Valognes, they resolved to avoid the risk of future failures by at once despatching their victim in the tumult of a night attack. Suspicions, however, were excited among the towns-people, notwithstanding their utmost caution; and, among others, a man named Galet, or Gillot, a species of jester, attached to the duke's household, took the alarm. He had preceded the arrival of his master, and like the court-fools of that day, with more attachment to the persons of their lieges than could be found amongst their favourites and ministers, he possessed a shrewdness peculiar to his profession, in which the glimpses of real wit gave a zest to apparent folly. He contrived to insinuate himself into the table-talk of the conspirators, and heard enough to convince him that some project, aiming at the duke's life, was on foot. Throwing aside his cap and bells, Galet seized his staff, and, if we are to believe his chronicler, used it so well as to reach Valognes before midnight. Refusing to confide his information to a second person, he gained admission, and knocked loudly at the duke's chamber-door: "Arise, arise, my lord, if you love your life!" and he immediately acquainted him with the circumstances and the extent of the danger.[1] It is stated that the motives which

[1] When the rank and numbers of the conspirators are considered, it seems highly probable that William should at first refuse to credit the

impelled the poor jester to make so extraordinary an assertion proceeded from gratitude to the duke for having formerly assisted him when at a sore pinch. "He even bestowed upon him," says his naïve chronicler, "his old clothes," enabling him, doubtless, by such a benefaction to make a more brilliant appearance at court and at the castle feasts.

William was at first inclined to discredit his story. Was it probable that his most confidential friends and adherents—the counsellors and supporters, too, of his father—upon whom he had heaped honours with a lavish hand, had combined to assassinate him in cold blood? But, moved by the repeated assurances of his faithful fool, he reflected some moments, and then rose in haste, and without giving a single order, is said to have saddled his steed with his own hands, and set off at speed.

As he dashed through the barriers in the direction of Véez St. Clément, he heard the heavy tramp of horse and the rattling of arms; they were his pursuers. They had attacked the place the moment after he had fled, and were now doubly intent upon taking his life, from a consciousness that their guilt was known. Better mounted, also, they were gradually gaining ground upon him, but retaining his self-possession, the duke suddenly struck off into a by-path, and, favoured by the darkness, eluded his assassins. Plunging into a small thicket, he remained concealed there until they had

story told him by a simple jester. The wonder is that he so soon penetrated the real truth, and made such a timely escape. The names of the conspirators prove the extent of this formidable combination: they were the lords of Thorigny, Hamon le Dentu (sharp-toothed Hamon), the wily Du Plessis, and other lords of the Cotentin and of Bessin, then busily engaged in making their night attack.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Walsingham.

passed on their way. Still it required the utmost degree of caution to escape falling into their hands. Bayeux and the adjacent districts were in the interest of the conspirators, and he was compelled to pursue his route in the direction of the sea-shore.

Towards the break of day, the duke reached a little village, called Ryes,[2] and observed a man seated at the court-gate of a stately mansion, ready equipped to go forth, waiting for his steed. The duke wished to pass by unnoticed, but his horse was so jaded that it was remarked by the seigneur, for such he was, who, recognising William, respectfully saluted him, and said: "My lord duke, is it you? How came you with so poor equipment, and in so sad a plight?" "Tell me first," replied the duke, "who you are, and why you ask the question?" "Upon my honour," rejoined the seigneur, "they call me Hubert de Ryes, and from you, as lord suzerain, I hold this village under the Count de Bessin:[3] yet speak boldly and fear nothing; for, upon

[2] In the quaint language of the chronicler,—"as though God had so disposed it, the seigneur, or master of that small place, had arisen and gone forth, and was then seated by his gate."—Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist.

[3] This noble, we must recollect, was one of the conspirators, and William had good reason for wishing to pass unrecognised. But honest Hubert made a proper distinction of persons, and preserved allegiance to his lord paramount, proving that he had both more sense and fidelity than his immediate landlord.

The dialogue is curious, also, as showing the conditions of military tenure in Normandy, which in this case do not seem to have imposed service upon the immediate tenant in waging war against the lord paramount, for on such a condition the master of Ryes would have forfeited his feudal tenure. It shows also that the feudal system, upon the subletting chain of tenure, was then established in Normandy, and how nearly it approached the regular feudal state afterwards established both there and throughout England.

my honour, I will consult your safety as much as if you were in my own skin." The duke then frankly told him the whole adventure, after which "the good seigneur" led him into his mansion, offered him refreshments, and commanded one of his fleetest steeds to be in readiness. Then, calling up his three sons, all of them noble chevaliers, he said, "Behold your liege lord and master; be quick—mount, and show your duty to your prince and to me. Look well to his safety; conduct him to Falaise without touching the high road, or entering into a single town." William pursued his route attended by his guides, traversed the country in a direct line, forded the river Orne,[4] and after a hard ride, reached the city of Falaise without accident, to the joy of his faithful Normans.

This remarkable incident in William's life is believed to have occurred in the year 1044; and how narrowly he escaped is evident from different historical accounts, well authenticated by contemporary documents relative to this conspiracy and its results.[5]

The duke's pursuers were close upon his track, and the honest Hubert, to give him a further advantage, and perhaps to save the lives of his own sons, when questioned by them, offered to lead them on the route he

[4] It is recorded that the duke passed the ford near the river Mutrecy, in 1044, which offers a farther corroboration of the period when the Earl of Burgundy's insurrection took place. It does not appear for what reason the old chroniclers agree in calling the river Orne by the name of Foupendant. There is also up to this day a farm in the neighbourhood of the river which bears the name of Mutrecy; it is about four miles distant from the river.

[5] Alluding to the duke's good fortune on this occasion, one of his earlier biographers humorously observes, in his quaint manner, "In actions of weight it is good to employ our best endeavours; but when all is said, '*he danceth well to whom Fortune doth pipe so well.*'"—Hayward, Lives, &c.

had taken, affecting at the same time perfect ignorance of their nefarious project. He conducted them, however, in a contrary direction, and every now and then he encouraged them in their speed by exclaiming, "My name is Hubert! upon honour! Ride sharp, we shall come up with him soon!"[6]

In commemoration of his wonderful escape, we are told that William ultimately punished his enemies by compelling them to construct the *terre levée*[7] which runs through a large tract of country, as a lasting memorial of their treachery, and to mark the scene of his extraordinary adventure. It is not easy to describe the feelings of mingled rage and fear which seized the conspirators when aware of William's arrival at Falaise. Flight or open war was the sole alternative left to them, and they decided upon the latter, in the hope of enlisting the support of the French monarch. They already formed a powerful confederacy, and vassals and bands of freebooters were now summoned to their aid from all sides. The name of William the Bastard was anathematised, and forbidden to be spoken throughout the whole extent of the Cotentin[8] and the adjacent

[6] M. de Bras; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham.

[7] This singular monument consists of a *chemin haussé*, or terraced road; the most useful, perhaps, he could have erected to mark his escape from the hands of his pursuers. Following the direction of his flight, it indicated the most direct route across the country, from the vicinity of Valognes through the intervening district to Bayeux, and thence to his strong town and castle-fortress of Falaise. A portion of this elevated line is still to be seen, situated between the villages of Ouilly le Tesson, Caitheoux, and Fresni le Pucceux, after a lapse of 760 years.

[8] A large territory, comprehending several counties, with their districts, towns, and castles; but at that time it was comparatively savage and wild, owing to long, depopulating wars. It received its name, probably, from its geographical position, which runs parallel to an extended line of coast.—Nouv. Hist. de Normandie.

districts. Having organised their forces they determined to attack the duke before he had time to rally his friends and recover from his surprise.

They formed, in fact, the majority of the great barons and their vassals, upon whose aid William had himself relied in the event of a fresh contest with the French king. The next intimation he received of the existence of this formidable conspiracy was the appearance of an immense force in the field, which made a sudden attack upon the city of Caen.

This was the first time that William had been found unprepared to meet so threatening a crisis; he was certainly taken by surprise, and it is the most extraordinary event in his whole career, that he should again have risen superior to circumstances, and even turned them to the greatest advantage. Fortune seems indeed to love the brave, and to suggest to them the only means of converting the greatest difficulties into sources of fresh triumph.

Too late aware of having been treacherously overreached, his anxiety and agitation are stated to have been extreme.[9] But the perils of William's position had early taught him the art of dissimulation, and to assume the firmest countenance in the worst position. He strengthened the outworks of Falaise, and, having reinforced the garrison, entrusted the command of it to a man of tried fidelity, named Bellain de Blainville. Then, making a forced march upon Rouen, he attempted to raise an additional force, sufficient to cope with his powerful enemies in the field. Volunteers, and even decrepit veterans, who had served under duke Robert and Richard the Good, came to join his banners; but

[9] Ord. Vit. ; Walsingham ; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.

his enemies, being largely reinforced with foreign mercenaries and adventurers, bore down upon the duke's small body of Normans, while he cautiously retired.

In this exigency, apprehensive also of an immediate attack on the side of France, William saw no means of safety except in negotiation and delay. At Rouen he advised with his uncle the archbishop, who, aware that the confederates were led by a man of consummate military skill, Niel, urged him by no means to risk his dukedom upon a battle, but to throw himself upon the justice and consideration of his former guardian and ally, the French king.

Startled at this bold but dubious policy, the duke fixed his penetrating eye upon the prelate, "as if he would peruse his inmost soul." [1] It was met, however, with an unquailing look; and, before his enemies could lay siege to the capital, duke William was in the presence of the monarch of France, prepared to play the part of his own ambassador.

In very critical circumstances, measures that would otherwise deserve to be called rash and desperate are really the most wise and prudent, and the duke now experienced this encouraging truth. The frank appeal to his former guardian and protector had the desired success. He stated all the advantages of an alliance with himself, in opposition to those proposed to the king by the conspirators against his life and dignity. He called to mind the signal services rendered by duke Robert, and the sacred engagements into which Henry had entered on his departure. He then pressed his cause on the ground of the king's own interests in so effectual a manner that the monarch was greatly

[1] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Mazeres.

moved.[2] "But," he boldly concluded, "dismissing all arguments of honour and good faith, it is impossible, my liege, for men so deeply dyed with ingratitude and treachery, as those who are now aiming at my life, to prove loyal and faithful to any master. Suppose me to fall their victim, they will instantly direct their ill-acquired power against the monarch whom, by their infamous calumnies, they would exasperate to take up arms to the injury of his first vassal and best ally."[3]

Such were among the powerful representations made by the duke, and Henry, regretting the lengths to which he had formerly gone, declared that he had now for the first time heard the truth. He was sure, he added, that he must have been grossly deceived, meaning, doubtless, that he perceived it would be more advantageous for him to enter into stricter alliance with William, than to aid his rebellious barons in proceeding to extremities against him. Gratified, perhaps, also, by the confidence reposed in him, if not animated with the chivalrous enthusiasm inspired by the young duke, and the generosity and clemency he had displayed, Henry declared that he would not only join him, but lead his own troops in person, and reinstate him in full authority, by right of his suzerainship,[4] not less than by the laws of feudal brotherhood and honour.

[2] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. ; Walsingham ; Duchesne. [3] Ibid.

[4] The title of suzerain, or lord paramount, on the part of Henry, was, however, very doubtful. At all events, it was merely nominal, without tenure of military service as regarded Normandy. It was merely a fiefdom to perform homage ; and not as the law of service, which existed between Normandy and Brittany. This is essential to keep in view, in considering the relative position of the parties, and the transactions which took place between Henry and William at this time, and between Henry's successors and the Anglo-Norman monarchs. It would appear, from the curious narrative left by Dudon de St. Quentin, that Charles the Simple

A French army was speedily equipped, while William repaired to Rouen, where he assembled his Normans, and the few barons, with their vassals, who still remained faithful to him.[5] The point fixed upon for the junction of their respective forces was the county of Hyêmes, in the vicinity of Argentau. They then advanced towards Caen, and took up a position between Mezidon and Argences. They formed distinct camps, the French being near the river Aizon, and that of the Normans upon the Meance, where they awaited the attack of the insurgent barons.

The Count du Cotentin, Niel or Nigellus, having ascertained the exact position of the two princes, marched to give them battle. He encamped in the Val de Dunes, about nine miles from Caen, between Argences and Cinglais.[6] An engagement was inevitable,

made a free gift of the country called Neustria, as well as of Brittany, to Rollo, without the usual conditions of feudal service. Nearly all contemporary and following historians, however, seem to take no exception to them. Yet the Norman dukes were more really lord suzerains, as regarded Brittany, which could hardly have been the case if Charles the Simple had reserved that title to the crown of France. That kingdom then comprised little more than Paris, Orléans, Etampes, Melun, Bourges, Compiègne, and their dependencies. The other parts were the appanages of the great barons, who, though they rendered homage, were perfectly free in their regal and legislative capacity, and exercised full sovereignty over their vassals.—Dudon de St. Quentin ; Chron. de Nor. ; Nouv. Hist.

[5] These lords, with their knights and vassals, "amongst the faithless, faithful only they,"—consisted of the counts of Vexin, of Roumenoit ; those of the Lieuoin ; the districts of Beaumont, of Auge and Caux, as well as the important sees of Evreux and Caen.

[6] A contemporary chronicler gives, in the following rude verses, a description of the relative positions of the French and Norman allies, on the eve of the famous battle of the Val de Dunes :—

"Entre Argences et Mezidon
Sur la rivière de l'Azon,

and the immense prize at stake—at once for empire and for life—was likely to render it an obstinate and desperate struggle. After hearing mass, the two princes put the heads of their divisions into motion. The king observed a strong body of the enemy's horse preparing to charge upon the spot where he and the duke stood. Not one of this gallant company was seen without some device upon the point of his lance.[7] The duke too, marking their close array, was at first greatly perplexed, till perceiving Rollo de Tesson at their head, with the ducal arms upon his banner, he advanced, exclaiming that they were his friends; and his words were caught up and repeated with cheers by the Normans. This bold stratagem had an effect similar to that of Napoleon's appeal to his veterans, after his return from Elba, and the revolted Normans stopped and wavered. Their leader, who had been gained over, and now appeared under false colours, turned to his companions, and said: "They falter! the count and Regneault expect me this day to keep my word, and be the first to strike the bastard William in the *mêlée;* yet to him did I swear fealty and do homage. I know not how to act." "Take heed," was the reply of one of his companions, "what you do. Let us join him: and you may still keep your oath to the confederates by approaching him, and touching him with

Se hebergerent ceux de France
Et joux tant les eaux de Meance;
Qui par Argences va courant
Se hebergerent ceux li Normans
Qui a Guilliaume se tenoient."—Chron. de Nor. Hist.

[7] In compliance, it seems, with the fashion of the eleventh century, these knights had decorated their arms with emblems and devices composed of their ladies' favourite colours.—Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Ord. Vit.; Dudon de St. Quentin, Contin. [8] Ibid.

your gauntlet, and this being done, fight stoutly in his behalf." De Tesson availing himself of this jesuitical expedient, rode alone up to the place where William was conversing with the French king, and, after saluting him, struck him gently upon the shoulder, saying, "Be not angry, my lord duke, it is only to acquit myself of a certain vow I have made; I will this day discharge my duty towards you loyally as becomes a vassal, and so will this company of knights." The duke smiling on him, made reply: "Raoul, you have my thanks; now see to acquit yourself well, I pray you!" [9]

The Normans, led by William, and drawn up in compact ranks, commenced the attack. The insurgent army also forming an extended line, and numbering 20,000 combatants, advanced with impetuosity to meet the duke's onset. So great was the ardour on both sides, that the bowmen had barely time for one discharge of arrows, before horse and foot closed in the fierce *mêlée*. The duke was opposed to the Count de Bayeux, and the king to the force of the Viscomte du Cotentin. Henry, being rather corpulent and unwieldy, was so roughly handled in the encounter by a knight named Guillisen,[1] that he was knocked down and in danger of being trampled upon or slain.[2] The duke at length succeeded in breaking the ranks of the Count de Bessin,[3] and was about to attack him lance in

[9] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham; W. of Malms.; Vie de Guilleaume, &c.; Ord. Vit.

[1] Ibid.

[2] This redoubtable Guillisen, who broke the French ranks, subsequently retired, with a number of the disaffected, to Apulia, where he joined Robert Guiscard and his freebooters, and contrived to carry on the war by laying popes and princes alike under the contribution of the sword.

[3] The war-cry of the Normans was, *Dieu aide et notre Dame;* that of the French, *Montjoie St. Dénis;* while the rebels shouted, *St. Sever, Hamon, St. Amand.*

hand, when his squire, named Bardon, threw himself between, and fell dead by the thrust intended for his master. At the same time Rollo de Tesson made a gallant charge, and completed the overthrow of the enemy.

The historic bards, then the great chroniclers, did not fail to commemorate the feats of William in befitting verse. The two lines composed by an anonymous poet, with reference to this decided victory, led the way to other effusions, which display the profound policy of the duke and his prelate counsellor, in having gained over king Henry to his interests:—

> "De Cotentin partit la lance
> Qui renversa le roi de France;"—

a singular historic truth as regarded the fortunes of William and those of his intriguing rival. His reputation in the eyes of other powers was increased by this master-stroke of policy, which, impressing his legitimate relatives and turbulent barons with respect, crowned his previous good fortune, and fixed his power. What might not be expected from a leader who, at the age of twenty-two, had triumphed over so many enemies?

King Henry returned to his capital, and the duke, on learning that Guy himself had sought refuge in his strong castle of Brione, and refused to send in his submission, marched and laid siege to the place, made himself master of the traitor's person, and, though he deprived him of the rich counties of Brione and Vernon, treated him with extraordinary lenity, magnanimity, and even respect.[4] It was the general expectation that

[4] When William duke of Normandy had suppressed the rebellion of Guy of Burgundy, who was his "homager" for the two castles of Brione on the river Rille and Vernon on the Seine, which the young duke had

he would have expiated his offences upon the scaffold; but not yet estranged from the policy he had hitherto pursued, William sought to reconcile his love of aggrandisement with a degree of generosity and clemency, as regarded the lives of his enemies.[5] He even settled a handsome provision upon his legitimate rival; treated him with the same marks of distinction as before, and invited him to resume his former position at the ducal court. The jealousy, however, of other aspirants, who murmured loudly, declaring that the penalty of banishment ought at least to have been enforced against him, induced the fallen pretender to withdraw, and enter the service of the Count of Maine. But, the ill odour of unsuccessful treachery still following him, he at last retired into his native country. At a subsequent period he highly distinguished himself in the service of the duke, and headed a large body of veteran troops at the famous battle of Hastings.

generously given him, and had taken prisoners both Guy himself and many of his companions, who were Normans, and consequently to be considered as rebels, he pardoned both Guy and them in the manner described in this sentence: "*Supplicia quæ capitalia ex æquo irrogarentur condonare maluit.*" Hence it would appear that, by the laws of Normandy, rebels might at this time be punished with death. This fact seems the more worth observing, because, in that age, the crimes of murder, robbery, and most other great offences, were visited only with pecuniary fines, according to the law of many nations of Europe.—Historia Ang.; Gesta Guillielmi Ducis, apud Mazeres, 61.

[5] The obligation of a feudal tenant to attend his lord in the wars, called *Satellitii debitum*, had been evidently broken by Guy of Burgundy, and he was subject to the extreme penalty of the feudal law for treason to the lord paramount. We meet in the old authors with the word *satellites*, which must be understood of feudal or military tenants attending their lords in the wars, and not of hired guards. It appears also from many passages, that all William's armies in these Norman and French wars were made up of feudal tenants, called together by the obligation of their tenures to assist their lord.—Gesta Guil. Ducis, apud Mazeres.

Fortunately for William, the result of this great conspiracy was to consolidate his power, and draw closer the bonds of alliance with the French king. He lost no time in extinguishing the last embers of revolt. More wary and provident as he pursued his career, he saw how much easier it is to reach a lofty eminence of power, than to maintain it. He was not again to be taken by surprise; and his first object was to remodel and complete that strict system of police, which at a future day enabled him to hold in awe the greatest nation in Europe. Conspiracy had no place to hide its head; and the compulsory order which he established, comprehending some modern rules of *espionnage*, soon rooted out those secret domestic enemies who had threatened his dominion and his life.

It was by such means that William succeeded in awing his great prelates and barons, securing the allegiance of their vassals, restoring subordination, and the authority of the neglected laws. We learn from contemporary authorities,[6] that by the complete suppression of this rebellion, comparative peace and plenty were everywhere restored; that all men could follow their occupations without danger, and that travellers, as well

[6] W. Pict.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; Chron. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; W. Malms. It appears that there were at this time merchants, or tradesmen, *negociatores*, in Normandy. They were most probably many of them like our pedlars, or perhaps those tradesmen who transact their affairs by travelling about with their goods from one place to another. The operation of the Norman feudal law, in fines, &c., upon this and other sources of public industry and prosperity is shown in the following passage of W. Pictaviensis: "*Ecclesiarum bona, agrestium labores, negociatorum lucra militum prædam injuste fieri dolebat.*" In fact, the inherent vices of the system counteracted the best and most enlightened efforts of William to render it tolerable in Normandy, and it became far less endurable in England.

as traders and agriculturists, rejoiced in being enabled to remove, without risk, from place to place. From the precautions now adopted by the duke, it would indeed appear to have been as well understood at that period as in the present times that facilities of travel form an indispensable requisite in the institutions of a trading and commercial community.

The accurate knowledge of his real position and strength, permitted William to show a magnanimity which, though it had its source in personal interest rather than in clemency, had a material influence in establishing his title and consolidating his power. William was an enlightened despot; and, when his barons and his people offered him no provocation for the display of that avarice and ambition by which he was actuated, he maintained the character of a wise and judicious ruler.

The enemies whom he had vanquished were men of great power, of high military reputation and experience, upon which they had calculated for success as opposed to his defective title and to his extreme youth. It is difficult to say whether this fact places his good fortune, his popularity with the Normans, or his distinguished merits, in the most striking point of view. But that he acted with as much magnanimity and generosity as judgment in the use of his victory, his conduct to his prisoners afforded the most incontrovertible proofs. While he deprived the Count du Cotentin, of a portion of his estates, he permitted him to retire into Brittany; and the traitor Du Plessis, though imprisoned after renewing his intrigues, was not put to death.

These men, be it remembered, and other great conspirators, had, on the contrary, attempted to deprive

William both of his crown and his life.[7] The insurgents of meaner rank, with their offending vassals, were included in a general amnesty, and many were even restored to favour. The only punishment inflicted was a preventive one, as useful to themselves as to their prince—the destruction of their strongholds, those nests of sedition, violence, and oppression. A few there were, the most desperate and obdurate, who, regarding the duke's pardon as a humiliation, preferred to join the banners of the adventurer, Robert Guiscard, in Naples, and contented themselves with the ravage of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily.[8]

It was during his subsequent residence at Falaise that William has been absurdly accused by some of the Saxon historians[9] of committing an act of assassination, the more atrocious because unnecessary. It should be recorded therefore solely with a view to its exposure and refutation, for though capable, perhaps, of perpetrating deeds of violence and even crimes, it is difficult to make posterity believe that a prince like William would commit acts of infatuation and useless cruelty. The parties, moreover, were nearly connected with King Edward the Confessor, a monarch with whom it

[7] These illustrious desperadoes, despairing of success by fair means, seem to have adopted for their motto against William, the Roman imprecatory resolve :

"Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo."

[8] That redoubtable knight, Robert Guiscard, the son of Tancred, was one of the most formidable freebooters and scourges of popes and princes of his day. He rose from the rank of a mere military marauder into the higher grades of the profession, became a commander of free bands, and pursued his devastations in the south of Europe with astonishing success. He had two brothers, almost equally illustrious, who became the terror of surrounding nations, often at the head of 20,000 men.

[9] Ord. Vit. Hist. Ang. p. 313.

was the duke's special interest that he should continue in the most amicable relations. Walter, Earl of Ponthieu, nephew of the Confessor, and his wife Biota, while at an entertainment given by William at his palace, are reported to have been poisoned on the same night. The first propagators of this strange story, and of some others resembling it, will appear in the course of our narrative, and sufficiently establish, not the heinous accusations brought against the duke, but their own malignant character, jealous hatred, and disappointment. It is little to be wondered at that such charges as these have been fabricated, and sedulously spread from age to age in derogation of a character so pre-eminently great as that of the conqueror of Harold, and the subverter of the Anglo-Saxon empire in England.

It is enough to observe that the mind guilty of the mean, treacherous, and cruel acts attributed to duke William must have been utterly incapable of conceiving those lofty enterprises, grand plans, bold and open means of executing them, which are in themselves the best evidence of a generous and magnanimous nature. Ingratitude to his Norman adherents, their banishment, and the confiscation of their estates, form another charge, which both his previous and his subsequent actions all tend to disprove. One of the facts on which this charge is founded—his treatment of William Warling, Earl of Montolieu—is alleged to have occurred about the period of his present residence at Falaise (1048),[1] when he had first succeeded in quelling the more turbulent of his great barons.

Descended from the first Norman duke, William's

[1] W. Gemiticensis, ap. Mazeres ; Ordericus Vitalis.

own great-grandfather, this influential noble was suspected, we are told, of an intention to renew the baronial wars. A retainer of his, a young Norman, in pursuit of fortune, was one day complaining of the idle and unprofitable life he led, since the great barons were subdued. "Indeed," he added, "I have serious thoughts of riding into Apulia, and joining the Guiscards, while I have yet a steed and armour upon my back. I shall never live through this peace; my poverty will soon be my only counsellor."

"If you will believe," replied the earl, "what I am now about to tell you, you will stop where you are in Normandy. Within the space of two or three months, there will be a great change, which will leave you at liberty to help yourself in proportion to your own courage and activity." Upon this pleasing assurance, young Bigot determined to stay where he was, and in a short time he was introduced to the duke himself, through the good offices of his relative, the bishop of Avranches. William is said to have received him in a very gratifying manner, and to have admitted him into his familiar conversation. Captivated with so much courtesy and kindness, the young knight requited it by communicating to the duke what had passed between himself and the earl. "Ah! sits the wind so!" thought the duke, and straightway he sends for the said William Warling, earl of Montolieu, who appears before him. "What mean you, my lord, by those assurances you have lately given to Robert Bigot." This was a question which the earl found it difficult to answer, and, having nothing satisfactory to say, he considered it to be his wisest course to decline all explanations by continuing silent. The duke then, we are

told, gave way to violent rage, and cried out, with one of his terrible looks: "I see plainly how it is, though you do not choose to own it. I will tell *you* what you meant by speaking in this manner to that good young man. Your intention was to raise fresh troubles in Normandy, and by a new rebellion to attempt to deprive me of my inheritance. Having this evil design in your heart, you scrupled not to seduce this young soldier from his duty, by promising that Normandy would soon afford a harvest to men of enterprise. But, sir, we have had enough of these disturbances, and Normandy stands greatly in need of peace and repose to repair the mischiefs occasioned by war. Now, I trust that you are a false prophet, and that we shall continue to enjoy for many years the peace which I have at length established. But, to effect this, we must first be rid of such turbulent personages as yourself. Hear my words, sir! I command you to quit the duchy without delay, and never to presume to set your foot in it again, so long as I shall be alive." Earl William, of Montolieu, not ill-pleased to escape upon such terms, immediately quitted Normandy for Apulia, attended by only one squire, the duke taking quiet possession of his earldom, which he settled upon his half-brother, Robert, the son of his mother by the Earl of Canterville, whom she had married after duke Robert's decease.[2]

It is not at all improbable that this scene may really have occurred; but the conversion of it into a charge recorded to the discredit of William shows the extreme embarrassment under which his enemies laboured, at that period at least, to find any reasonable accusations by

[2] W. Gemiticensis, l. vii. cap. 19; Hist. Ang. Gesta Gal.

which to dim the lustre of his successes. Upon the supposition of the earl's guilt, William's conduct was not only justifiable, but evinced moderation and lenity. It is true that it was deficient in the forms of law, the accused not being brought to a trial for his offence before any court of judicature. But this might not be necessary according to the laws of Normandy then in force, when the person charged with a crime by the duke himself did not deny it. For it was customary in those days for the dukes of Normandy to administer justice in person.[3] And it would appear by his silence that earl William himself was desirous that the matter should not be brought before a regular tribunal; but was content to submit to the sentence pronounced upon him by his offended lord. It was, in fact, a mitigation of that to which he would have been liable by law, and which would have brought his life into jeopardy.

With regard to the accusation of ingratitude to his followers, brought by his rebellious barons both in Normandy and in England, it is equally unworthy of being entertained as a general charge; the duke having indisputably injured his popular character as a ruler by pursuing the opposite extreme. The adjudications given in his numerous wardships offer the best refutation to such a charge. Thus, for example, when king of England, upon the death of the famous William Fitzosborne, the Conqueror granted the castle of Breteuil, and all his other lands in Normandy, to his eldest son, William de Breteuil; and all his great possessions in England to his second son, Roger, Earl of Hereford, who indeed displayed the most revolting ingratitude in

[3] Excerpta Orderico Vitali ap. Mazeres, p. 303.

return for this liberal and noble treatment. It was the more honourable, as, in that instance, the Conqueror does not seem to have been tied down by any fixed rule or law upon the subject, but was governed entirely by his own judgment and discretion.

CHAPTER III.

William consolidates his power—Attention to his foreign interests and relations—Inquires into the laws of Normandy—Their feudal character—Engages in public works—Motives of his pacific policy—Dangerous position of king Henry—Geoffrey Martel, Earl of Anjou, invades France—Noble conduct of William—Admirable promptitude—Throws himself between Henry's capital and the invader—Compels him to retreat—Rage and disappointment of Martel—Exploits of William—Jealousy of the king—He enters into a separate treaty with the earl—Difficult position of William—He is compelled to retreat—Pursued by Martel into Normandy—Devastations committed by the invader—William strengthens his fortresses—Too weak to attack the enemy—Admirable mode of warfare—The old guerilla system—His skill and address in defensive warfare—His flying columns—War of posts—Sieges and gallant actions—Raises the siege of Domfront—Challenges and pursues the invader—Former clemency and magnanimity—His triumph—Falls into an ambuscade—Narrow escape—Splendid action—Recovers his dominion—Singular rencounter—William makes peace with Geoffrey Martel—Returns to Rouen—Grand military assembly and reviews—He rewards his troops—Declares his intention of visiting the court of England—Is received by Edward with marked distinction—Prepares the groundwork of his future successes—Enmity of earl Godwin's party—Danger of William—He attends the king in a progress through the country—Visits the fortresses—Portrait of the duke at Edward's court—Court festivities—Sudden recall into Normandy—His alliance with the court of Flanders—Passion for his beautiful cousin, Lady Matilda—Long courtship—Singular scene—William's perseverance and success—His marriage—Anecdotes—Courtly festivities—Awkward dilemma—Rupture with his uncle, the archbishop—Appeals to the pope—The celebrated Lanfranc—Success of William—Obtains a dispensation—The archbishop in disgrace—William founds the abbey of St. Stephen—His brother Odo—The duchess Matilda—New war with France, and rout of Henry's brother Eudo—Sarcastic lines addressed to him by William—Successes of William in Anjou and Maine—Anecdotes and exploits—Feudal

institutions—Rise of the great towns—Encouragement of trade and commerce—Equilibrium of the interests of his states—Government—Police—Councils—Ceremonies—Foreign influence and reputation—Alleged conspiracy—The duchess Matilda—Her vindictive spirit—Her influence over William—His credulity and uxorious passion.

So rapid had been the progress and so great the acquisitions of William in his last campaign, that from this period[4] the wars of the barons and of the succession may be said to have ceased in Normandy. Henceforward he appears in a more extended and important, though less perilous, field of action. His wars are with foreign potentates and princes; his policy aimed to extend as well as to consolidate the power of Normandy. Here, too, his success was proportioned to the skill and judgment with which his plans were conceived and executed. He had succeeded in extinguishing the last sparks of insurrection; and he now devoted himself with ability and vigour to develop the resources of the country, and to repair the evils caused by domestic and foreign broils.

In 1046, and the ensuing year, we find him earnestly engaged with his "councils" in enacting new and revising the old laws of Normandy, in accordance with the growing spirit and the spread of feudalism. At the same time he was alive to the importance of promoting public works, of improving his sea-ports, and gradually forming a commercial and naval power. Actuated by the adventurous spirit of the times, he already entertained ulterior views of conquest and aggrandisement; to which may be traced the motive of his pacific labours and his anxiety to strengthen his alliance with the French king and the neighbouring princes of Poitou, Anjou and Maine.

But, before he had time to mature his new plans, he

[4] 1046 to 1048. W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; Walsingham.

was suddenly recalled to the field by a pressing danger, which threatened his ally of France, and even the stability of that monarch's throne. Geoffrey Martel, one of the most ambitious princes of his time, with singular audacity, advanced his claims as Earl of Anjou to an integral portion of the French monarchy. Confident in his high military reputation and power, he prepared to besiege Henry in his capital. The young duke had thus an opportunity of evincing his sense of the service rendered by his lord suzerain and ally in the late campaign. His policy accorded in this instance with his feelings; and Fortune seemed already to encourage the views of her favourite, with regard to the annexation of Maine. Fearless of the boasted genius and skill of his adversary, then esteemed the first leader in Europe, William threw himself boldly between the invader and "the good city" of Paris. The earl pronouncing this to be a false movement, prepared to make sure of his prey. Long celebrated for his victories over the captains opposed to him, he had never hitherto suffered a reverse.

Having no apprehension of so young an aspirant[5] to fame, he trusted to his own military skill as a counterpoise to the junction of William with the power of France. What was his surprise and chagrin, therefore, to find himself outgeneralled, and gradually driven from point to point, almost without a struggle, into the heart of his own dominions. The duke carried the castle of Moulines in a style that extorted the admiration of his adversary not less than of his oldest soldiers.

[5] Afterwards, however, when he had experienced the force of William's genius, as well as of his arm, he was heard to declare that "if William the Bastard should survive some years, he would become one of the greatest commanders Europe had ever seen."—Life of Geoffrey Martel, &c.

He directed every operation of the field; was seen at every spot where danger menaced, and, though only in his 24th year, foiled all the manœuvres of his veteran and experienced adversary. He also displayed traits of personal heroism, exceeding even the standard required by the spirit of high adventure, and of feudal devotion to the cause of a "lord suzerain," in seasons of adversity or distress. On one occasion, while reconnoitring the enemy with only four or five of his knights, he was surprised by an ambuscade laid by his wily foe, consisting of twelve select horsemen. He was called upon to surrender—to flee was impossible; and, lowering his lance, William overthrew his first assailant;[6] then a second, sustaining the combat with the aid of his companions, till a rescue was made. First in the pursuit, he took seven of the party prisoners, leading them in triumph to the camp, where king Henry met him at the head of 300 of his bravest knights, and was seized, it is said,[7] with a pang of jealousy, at hearing the applause bestowed upon the young hero by the feudatories of France. Nor was this feeling confined to the breast of the monarch. It rankled in the mind of the worsted earl, and influenced even parties nearer to the duke's person, who, having regarded William the Bastard as a compeer rather than a master, could not witness his marked superiority without pain. To such an extent was this mean and ungenerous spirit carried, as to induce king Henry to negotiate a separate

6 "So rudely and with such force," says the Chronicler, "as to break both his arm and his thigh; leaving him at the duke's mercy, who does not appear, even on this trying occasion, to have wreaked his vengeance on the man's life."

7 Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham; Ord. Vit.; W. Malms.

treaty with the earl, upon terms which the latter was glad to accept, without including the gallant ally who had flown to his rescue, chastised the pride of his dreaded enemy, and strengthened his throne. He had once owed its possession to his father; he was now indebted for it to the braver son. This transaction alone suffices to stamp with infamy the conduct of Henry. The mean and dastardly act of deserting his benefactor, and consigning him to the vengeance of his deadliest foe, at the head of a superior force, presents one of those anomalies to be accounted for only upon the ground of envy so bitter as to overpower every nobler feeling of the human mind.

This separate treaty, which took place in the year 1048, placed William in a situation of extreme peril, and naturally aroused his indignation against the baseness of the French monarch. Instead of reaping the fruits due to his exertions in the permanent friendship and gratitude of his ally, he found himself in an enemy's country, constrained to retreat before him whom he had just vanquished, not without the impending danger of having the war transferred into his own dominions. The jealous count, irritated at the thoughts of his sullied fame, and eager to wipe off the stain in the eyes of all Europe, was not a man to forego the advantages which this act of royal treachery presented to him. He had also, as he presumed, resources to enable him to carry his vengeance into complete effect. Not only was he now Lord of Anjou, but of the warlike county of Bourges, part of Maine and Touraine, whence he had driven the count Thibault; as well as of Poitou itself, of which he had also deprived its rightful heir. Normandy and France were the next objects of his warlike

ambition, which might, perhaps, have proved successful, had not the duke bravely thrown himself into the breach to rescue the dishonoured crown of France.

In this cruel emergency, to retreat in the best order he could was the only expedient the young duke could adopt; and this he effected with consummate skill and coolness.

On reaching the frontiers of Normandy, he had the additional mortification to find that a spirit of disaffection, produced by the desertion and fomented by the intrigues of the king, was again at work, while his frontier towns were in a state of the utmost insubordination and alarm. Before his prompt measures could restore order, his redoubtable foe was upon his track, carried Alençon by assault, and became master of the fortress of Domfront and a part of the district of Passages.

William was now compelled to fall back upon his central city of Falaise, which he fortified, and made the rallying point of his future operations. All his efforts were bent to reinforce his army, so as to enable him to meet the invader in the open field. No sooner had he effected this object, than he suddenly appeared before the castle of Domfront, to which he laid siege. Though attacked in his march by a body of the enemy's horse, he not only repulsed but pursued them up to the very walls of the place. He then summoned the garrison to surrender.[8] It is stated that on this occasion he slew with his own hand the leader of the enemy's squadron, thus inspiring his followers with a confidence in his valour and fortune, so requisite in the exigency of the moment, when he was about to face with inferior force an

[8] Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist.; Ord. Vit.; Wace; W. of Malms.

experienced and veteran foe. That foe was in full march to raise the siege; a battle was imminent, under every disadvantage to the Normans; but the good fortune of William once more attended him, and succour came from a quarter whence he could least have expected it.

It was at this juncture that the magnanimity and clemency formerly shown to his insurgent barons met with their just reward. That able and practised military leader, Niel, eager to manifest his gratitude for the boon of his forfeit life, marched with 5,000 followers upon Angers, cut to pieces a considerable body of the earl's troops, and carried alarm to the very gates of his capital. For this signal service William restored to him his dominion of the Cotentin, effected a junction with him, and hastened to surprise his adversary before he recovered from the blow. These events so completely disconcerted the earl's plans, that we are told[9] he no longer displayed the same judgment and decision, and that in his subsequent acts he appeared to be rather a reckless desperado than a leader of consummate skill.

William, still pressing the siege, now despatched an envoy to his rival, to acquaint him that, if he felt disposed to relieve the place, he would find him ready to receive him at the gates. The young knight, Montgomery, was conducted into the lord of Anjou's presence, and reported the duke's message word for word. "You will inform William the Bastard," was the count's reply, "that he shall see me at to-morrow's dawn upon my white charger, ready to do battle, and that I will enter the gates of Domfront in spite of him. That he may the better know me, I shall carry a gold

[9] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Vie du Duc Guilleaume; Prévost.

crown-piece, without any other device, upon my helmet." "Before that time, my lord," replied Montgomery, "you will have a visit here from the duke, mounted on his good Bayard, showing a crown of *gueules*, and at the end of his lance a broidered scarf, to wipe away your tears." With these words the gentle knight and his companions returned to the duke, and gave him an exact account of their mission.

Expectation of some bold feats was now rife throughout both armies; but before the earl had drawn out his troops, came the same envoy bearing a false report that the duke was master of Domfront. Geoffrey Martel retired, and with this event, and the subsequent fall of the fortress, terminated the great soldier's invasion of Normandy.

Such was the result of his threats that he would chastise the young duke's presumption, and hurl him from the ducal dominion he had usurped. Trembling for the safety of his own capital, he now fell back upon Ambières, while the duke having sent the enterprising Niel in pursuit, planted his victorious banners upon the towers of Domfront.

Exasperated at this successful stratagem, Martel sought to retaliate by a well-laid ambuscade in a wood, close to which William was about to pass upon his route to rejoin the Count du Cotentin. On this occasion he was nearly successful, the duke having been completely surprised. This must have been attended with the most disastrous results, had not the duke's bravery and presence of mind foiled the happy manœuvre of his enemy. He exposed his person to all risks; some of his best knights were already extended in the dust; his numbers were rapidly thinning, and his veteran

Normans wavered. Perceiving them at length about to give way, he charged into the thick of the enemy, while his eyes flashed fire, exclaiming, "If you love me not, Normans, yet for shame follow me; for shame stand by me; for shame let not any at home hear it said that you ran, and left me fighting alone!" It was impossible that a leader, who could thus speak and act, should have soldiers unworthy of him; they turned and charged once more, and the battle was restored. Each chief displayed the utmost resources that his skill or courage suggested; but the youthful impetuosity and strength of William prevailed. At one moment he penetrated through the enemy's ranks to the spot where Martel fought, who had a narrow escape, it seems, from the deadly lance of his rival.[1] In the encounter, the bold Geoffrey had a piece of his ear carried away along with his plume and boasted device.[2]

Finally, becoming master of Ambières in Maine, the duke resolved to erect a fortress at once, to keep in check his powerful rival, and to overawe the surrounding territory. Geoffrey of Mayenne, who held his county as a fief from the Earl of Anjou, appealed to him as his lord for protection against the duke's design.[3]

[1] Vie du Duc Guilleaume le Conquérant; Nouveaux Détails sur Guilleaume de Normandie; Hist. de Nor.; Wace; Walsingham; Ypodigma; Thierry: W. Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Sismondi; W. Pict.; Henderson.

[2] The battle is very *naïvely* related by one of the old Chroniclers, who, after this specimen of the Duke's skill in ear-slitting, very naturally infers "that the count declined any more returning to the charge."

[3] By this it appears that the duties of a lord and his vassal, or feudal tenant, were reciprocal, and that as the vassal was to forfeit his fiefs if he did not attend his lord in the wars, according to the condition of his tenure, so the lord was to forfeit his sovereignty over the fief if he did not defend his tenant when unjustly attacked. And accordingly we meet with frequent instances, in these times, of vassals throwing off their

He represented, that, if carried into execution, it would expose the country round the city of Mayenne to be invaded and plundered by the Normans at their pleasure. The answer of Geoffrey Martel to this application was: "I will give you leave to reject me for your upper lord for the future, as being a base and spiritless protector of my dependents, if I let this encroachment be made on your territory, without doing all I can to prevent it." The duke, however, persevered; and, having succeeded in his object, placed a Norman garrison in the fortress. The Earl of Anjou, assisted by his lord, William, Earl of Poitou, and Eudo, Earl[4] of Brittany, then laid siege to it with a numerous force, but without success; and afterwards, on the approach of William with an army of Normans, they abandoned the siege with precipitation, and returned home. Geoffrey, the reigning prince, who had held the city and territory of Mayenne from the Earl of Anjou, being unable to contend with the Norman power, was compelled to transfer his homage to duke William, who

allegiance to their lords on this account, and transferring their homage or dependence to other princes more able and willing to protect them. The result of this very attempt of William to build a castle at Ambières was a change of the sovereignty of the city and territory of Mayenne.—W. Pict.; Gesta Gal.; Duces &c., apud Mazeres.

[4] The several titles of count, or earl, marquis, and duke, were known as distinct appellations even in this early age; though nobles invested with the higher titles are often called earls or counts. But though the inferior rank is frequently assigned to those who bore higher honours, yet they whose proper title was *comes* were never called duke or marquis. Thus the great man who is the subject of this history, was often called *Comes Normanniæ*, and Baldwin, Marquis of Flanders, is called *Comes Flandrensis*. But a subordinate earl—as the Earl of Arques, in Normandy, *Comes Arcensis*, or the Earl of Ponthieu, *Comes Pontivi*—is never called *dux*.—Hist. Ang. apud Mazeres, p. 49.

thus added a new and important frontier to his own dominions.

The duke next directed his arms against Alençon, still in possession of the enemy. During his march he was again intercepted by his artful adversary. He was not however taken by surprise; and the ambuscade found him posted at the head of his best troops ready to receive them. The enemy fled, and William pursued with so much ardour that he came up with their leader, attempting to cover the retreat, unhorsed him in sight of the fortress, and was near entering the gates of the town with the fugitives.[5]

After closely inspecting its strength, the duke, we are told, raised three bastillons so as completely to beleaguer the castle. A strong body of the earl's vassals were encamped upon the banks of the Sarthe and marched to its relief. But the Normans, having occupied the opposite side of the river, took up a position which they covered with strong breastworks, so near that both parties were in sight of each other.

The men of Anjou and its vicinity seem to have been as famous for their love of wit and repartee as for their old feudal lore; and amused themselves with taunting the Normans with their bitter gibes, in which they far excelled them, though less accomplished, per-

[5] Among other names of men of note, recorded by the Chroniclers as having been present with William in this campaign, we find many that are still to be met with in the modern baronage of Great Britain. We may instance Roger de Montgomery and William Fitzosborne, then young men distinguished for their valour, who afterwards accompanied the duke into England, and obtained large estates there. There were also Robert de Beaumont, the Count d'Aumale, Amauri de Flavacour, whose high fortune, like their exploits, seemed to become hereditary, and to be handed down as heirlooms to their noble descendants.

haps, in the sterner art of war. The most provoking challenges and biting sobriquets were then in fashion. The southern trouveurs and gleemen had an abundant store of these, and when "in the vein" spared not with their ribald wit the greatest dignitaries, whether princes, prelates, or popes.

No wonder that in such circumstances they should, unluckily for themselves, fix upon the duke's birth as a happy subject for their satiric art. They discharged their gall-dipped arrows with so true an aim as to give the most exquisite pain to the haughty Normans, who could not bear the insulting jests launched against their favourite leader, without a burning desire of revenge. Less polished and experienced in these satiric tournaments, a dangerous exercise of the rising school of the "trouveurs," they by no means tolerated the laws of lampooning as a part of the *gaie science*. But the besieged were little aware that their warlike lord had just suffered a defeat, while they were indulging in their favourite sport. At the sight of the duke, their derision burst out in the cry of *la pel, la pel, à la pel,* at the same time exhibiting from the walls skins and leather jerkins, and calling out for the Norman tanners. This coarse allusion to the duke's mother, and to the trade of Falaise, was bitterly resented. By us at this period these apparently harmless sallies may be thought worthy only of contempt, but they were then far from being despicable, on account of the influence they exercised over public opinion, as well personal as political.

Among the institutions of that day, the Courts of Love, as they were termed, were also schools of romantic adventure and poetic satire, from which emanated the

minstrel's songs, and the trouveur's tales of love and war. Kings were known to pique themselves upon being enrolled members of these courts of honour, the arena in which public characters were made the theme of praise or reproach. Monarchs themselves became adepts in wielding diatribes as well as their swords; and no wonder that William, who had resented reflections upon his birth when yet a boy, should feel incensed at these repeated efforts to excite disaffection and contempt for his person in the eyes of his legitimate contemporaries and his own vassals. That he was greatly irritated on this occasion, his cruelty, so much at variance with his former magnanimity, sufficiently proves, though the degree of provocation can form no excuse for his conduct. Having in one of the assaults become master of the suburbs, he is said to have cut off the hands and feet of his prisoners, which were thrown over the walls, with an intimation that the same fate was reserved for the whole garrison, if they did not surrender. He also set fire to the town at different points, and attempted to carry it by assault. These demonstrations were effectual; and the stronghold of Alençon was given up to the exasperated duke.

The Earl of Anjou, despairing of being able longer to oppose so fortunate an adversary, was glad to listen to the terms proposed by William, which, though greatly to his advantage, were not dishonourable to his gallant but unfortunate rival.

On his return to Rouen in 1051, the duke summoned a council of his great barons and prelates, and, in the presence of the subordinate authorities, received the renewal of their oaths of fealty. Having next called a grand assemblage of his knights and vassals, with the

veteran troops who had attended him in his successful campaigns, he reviewed and harangued them; and afterwards distributed among them those honours and promotions which, by their good conduct, he said, they had so well merited. They were then entertained at a splendid banquet in the capital; and nothing delighted the duke more than to apportion rewards with his own hands, a custom which he retained at the great military assemblies, summoned periodically, when he became King of England. At all these councils and assemblies he now declared his intention of proceeding upon a visit to his relative and ally, king Edward, at the English court. Some of the contemporary chroniclers and bardic historians of that day agree in the assertion that, on a previous visit made by Robert, his father, the English monarch promised that if he died without issue he would, by his will, appoint William his heir; and the authority of a testament was great in that age, says Hume, even where the succession of a kingdom was concerned. This step of the son may have been intended to remind the king of such an engagement, and to ingratiate himself perhaps into the favour of his father's friends and that of the people. Some such motives of interest, it is most probable, led to this special act of courtesy at this period, on the part of William.

It must have been in the year 1051 when the duke paid this visit to his devout relative, and it appears that he was most hospitably and magnificently entertained by him. It is supposed that it was the only time he was in England previously to the grand invasion.[6] With regard to the alleged claim on the crown, Ingulphus expressly declares that, during his sojourn at the court,

[6] P. Pict.; Ingulphus; Lord Lyttleton, Life of Henry II.

no mention was made on either side of duke William's succeeding to it on the demise of the Saxon monarch. Edward was not unmindful, however, of the days of adversity,[7] which he had spent in Normandy, and, besides presents of hawks and hounds, in which he knew the duke took great delight, he gave him numerous other tokens of his high regard. The exile of earl Godwin and his sons,[8] though they had been received at the courts of Flanders and Normandy, was undoubtedly favourable to the influence, if not to the ulterior views of the duke at this period. As he had appointed a council of regency to act during his absence, composed of De Beaumont and some of his stanchest adherents, he was under no apprehensions of domestic troubles, and had time to make himself acquainted with the Anglo-Saxon customs and manners, as well as with the different parties and factions that prevailed under the weak but pacific reign of the Confessor. The last of the Saxon and Danish kings, he repeatedly testified the gratitude he had never ceased to feel towards the duke's father for the protection afforded him in his exile. Nor was the admiration due to the young prince's exploits less publicly displayed, though the Normans generally were viewed with extreme jealousy, both by the nobles and by the people.

They were reminded, doubtless, by the king and other friends of the politic duke, that Emma, the mother of their sovereign, when driven by adverse fortune to

[7] Higden Polycronicon ; Wace ; Chron. de Nor. ; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. ; Walsingham ; Polydore Virgil.

[8] William's visit was not long before archbishop Robert's banishment, so that the message he is said to have carried to the duke, concerning Edward's donation must have been soon after this period, between the visit and the exile.—Haddon MS., with authorities.

seek a foreign asylum in 1013, was received and protected at the court of Normandy. As if to promote some ulterior views likewise, the causes of this event were retraced, by showing how, on the death of Canute, his dominions were divided among his three sons, Swein being made king of Norway, Harold Harefoot, of England, and Hardicanute, the issue of his second marriage with Emma, becoming king of Denmark; and that, notwithstanding the efforts made by duke Robert in the cause of the royal fugitives, they were subsequently, in the year 1035, dispossessed and deprived of their family inheritance. Again, when the sons of Ethelred, Alfred and Edward, during William's minority, accepted the royal invitation from England, and with a numerous retinue repaired to their mother Emma at Winchester, they became the objects of earl Godwin's deadly hatred. The barbarities of which he was guilty in conjunction with Harold Harefoot, and his overweening ambition, led to a state of things the most disastrous for the Anglo-Saxon succession. Alfred was put to death; but Emma and her son Edward escaping, as we have related, into Normandy, were treated by duke Robert with the greatest kindness and consideration; and he even compelled Canute to enter into terms with them; although these were afterwards broken.

The reign of Harold Harefoot, who died in 1039, was a brief one. He was succeeded by Hardicanute, who, upon being informed of the barbarous death inflicted on his half-brother Alfred, ordered the body of the royal assassin to be disinterred, and thrown into the Thames.

From the period of king Canute's decease, there sprang up two powerful rival interests, to the ultimate exclusion of the reigning dynasty in the person of

Edgar Atheling. These were the faction of earl Godwin, nearly connected by marriage with two former monarchs, and whose still closer relation to Edward gave him immense influence in the country, and the no less potent but more distant ascendancy of the Norman duke.[9] Both had been instrumental in the succession of Edward to the throne; but the Normans supplied him with ships and soldiers, when he was invited by general consent of the nation to take possession of the crown. The monarch was induced to marry earl Godwin's daughter, Editha, with whom however he refused to associate, though he could not, with the same ease, throw off the yoke of her haughty father. At length he succeeded also in that object; and duke William having vanquished all his domestic foes, the king was eager to avail himself of his rising power to repress the soaring pride of Godwin and his sons. They speedily returned however, became masters of the government, and dictated both to the country and to the court.[1] But they could not eradicate king Edward's early prepossessions in favour of Normandy,[2] or obliterate his gratitude for the generous efforts made by duke Robert and his son, to restore him to his ancestral throne.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he should do all in his power to render his young relative's reception in London both as welcome and as brilliant as possible.

[9] Perpetual feuds and animosities prevailed between earl Godwin and the English, and those Normans whom king Edward had advanced to preferment. They were looked upon by the English nobility with a very angry eye; this was the chief cause that the king banished earl Godwin and his sons.—Malms. 45, 46; Haddon MS.

[1] Hume; Henry; Lingard; Mackintosh, Hist. of England.

[2] Ingulphus; Wace; W. Malms.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Vestigia Ang.; Monasticon.

That it roused the jealousy of earl Godwin and his partisans was very evident, by the secret intrigues and open tumults[3] which they sought to excite, against the friends and guests of their sovereign. But they were not at this time successful; and Edward omitted no occasion of testifying his warm admiration, as well as his affection and respect, for his Norman cousin.[4] Complimenting him in public upon his bold achievements, he took delight in holding them up to the imitation of his nobles, and directing towards them the popular applause, to the infinite chagrin of the proud earl and his adherents; the latter of whom scarcely refrained from proceeding to acts of violence against the young duke. It was perhaps only his high personal character and fearless demeanour that protected him. Though only in his twenty-eighth year, he inspired that sort of

[3] Several instances had already occurred. As Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, the king's brother-in-law, passed through Canterbury on his way home, there happened an unlucky fray between his retinue and the citizens, and several persons were slain. Eustace hastened back to complain to the king, who took his part, and gave orders for the citizens to be severely punished, and without being heard. Godwin, on the other side, in whose earldom this happened, espoused the cause of his countrymen, and opposed this command as unjust and illegal, moving that they might have a fair trial. The king was so vehemently incensed against him and his sons, that he procured the banishment of these stout opposers of arbitrary sway, under pretence of designs against his honour, crown, and dignity.

Not long afterwards duke William came into England.—Haddon MS., B. M..

[4] It is stated that, among other modes of testifying his regard, he accompanied his guest in a progress through the country, to show him the principal cities and castles of his kingdom. This was, doubtless highly gratifying to a warlike character like William, and he appears to have made a good use of the opportunity, and to have noted well the best sites for his future structures, to enslave the people.—W. of Malms.; Tyrrel, Hist. of Eng.

respect mixed with awe, which, in the voice, the eye, and whole demeanour of the man, daunts the purpose of the assassin. There was a dignity partaking of grandeur in his spirit, a stern rebuking genius in his look, which few had heart to encounter, much less to defy; a power similar to that from which his intended executioner recoiled at the sight of Marius; and, though some Normans had previously been massacred in England, like the Danes, when other means failed, the future Conqueror walked unscathed amidst fiery glances and half-drawn weapons, ready at the beck of the ambitious aspirant to the government of the country to establish his power in blood.

This inveterate hostility was chiefly confined to earl Godwin's faction. William's prudence, fearless bearing, and animated conversation, not untinged with enthusiasm and eloquence, could not fail at that period to awaken interest and conciliate regard. The extent of his information, his singular energy and powers of mind, far above the common standard, gave a zest to his occasional wit, and to his poetic repartees, such as he had displayed towards his rivals of France and Anjou. Like all great minds, he evinced nothing which partook of mean envy or jealousy; and he held all little arts, malice, or treachery, in contempt.[5] Ever boldly asserting his pretensions, he aimed directly at the objects he had in view.

Such is the portrait of William of Normandy at the period when, flushed with youth and conquest, he first visited the court of England. Nor is it improbable that, recommended by so many extraordinary qualities, by his near relationship, and by his claims on Edward's

[5] Walsingham; W. Malms.; W. Pict.; Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

gratitude,[6] he received some intimation from that monarch in confirmation of the previous understanding with duke Robert,[7] of his intention, with the consent of the nobles and the people, to appoint him his successor to the English crown. But no testamentary evidence of such intention having been handed down, it is one of those questions that may still continue to occupy the industry of research and ingenuity of reasoning beyond the range of historical facts. The king was childless, and duke William had fair grounds on which to base his hopes, from the monastic mode of life to which the pious monarch strictly adhered, subsequently to the period of his former residence at Jumièges. He had taken a vow of chastity, and, in the true spirit of a bigot, even incarcerated his consort in a monastery, after the revolt of the earl her father, though she had not afforded him any pretext for so harsh a measure by the infringement of those vows for which he professed so marked a veneration.

He relaxed, however, something of his sombre austerity on occasion of the visit of the young Norman, who even then enjoyed a military reputation second to that of no prince in Europe. But, while partaking of the king's hospitality, in the midst of a succession of Saxon feasts and revelries, he was recalled by the intrigues of one of those turbulent chiefs who ill brooked the compulsory sway he had so recently established over them. Buzâz, Count of Eu, a descendant of Richard "Sans Peur," had raised the standard of revolt, most probably at the instigation of William's English

[6] W. Malms.; Wace; Walsingham; Thierry; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; Mazeres; Lingard; Mackintosh.

[7] Nouv. Hist. de Normandie.

enemies, who left no means untried to remove him from the vicinity of king Edward's court. [8]

Hastening back to Normandy, William, with the utmost expedition, entered the rebel count's territory, took him prisoner in his own castle, and banished him. Like so many other disaffected chieftains in different countries, this bold insurgent joined the banners of the free companies in Apulia, where, under the name of the Count de Montreuil, he became distinguished in those ferocious wars. He subsequently repaired to the French court, and was presented by king Henry with the territory of Soissons—an act indicative of the lingering hostility of the French monarch, who thus sought to defeat duke William's object to rid himself of a troublesome if not a very formidable neighbour.

Shortly after his return from England, it appears that William directed his thoughts to the consolidation of the advantages he had acquired, and the strengthening of his position, by forming a matrimonial alliance. He was induced to adopt this politic resolution, we are informed, [9] at the express wish of his chief "barons and vassals," seconded by the "notables" of the now rising towns, who were naturally anxious to guard against another disputed succession. It will not be uninteresting to throw a retrospective glance on some circumstances which preceded an event so important in its consequences to the English nation, in connection with that form of government and those free institutions which it obtained under some of his

[8] Walsingham ; Wace ; Chron. Sax. ; Chron. de Nor. ; W. Malms. ; Mazeres.

[9] Duchesne ; Wace ; Walsingham ; P. Pict. ; W. Malms. ; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

heroic successors. Matilda of Flanders, daughter of Baldwin V., Earl of Brittany, and descended on the maternal side in a direct line from the great Alfred, was the lady selected by William to adorn his rank, give lustre to his power, and perpetuate his family sway. She was beautiful and highly accomplished; but he had to surmount difficulties which few men less ardent and persevering would have ventured to encounter, from the decided dislike evinced towards him by his fair cousin, and from the hostility of her friends. Neither prince nor peasant, however cool and stoical, could sustain with indifference a series of rebuffs at once from the beloved object and from her relatives. We are informed by the sympathising chroniclers,[1] upon this occasion, that for nearly seven tedious years he had to bear the brunt of their united neglect and scorn, besides enduring the mortification of finding his spurious birth advanced as a motive for declining the proposed alliance. But not even the reports that she had bestowed her affections on a handsome young Saxon, sent as envoy from the English court, could deter him from his pursuit. And here again, contrary to all reasonable expectations, his happy star rose in the ascendant, superior to every adverse influence. From some unexplained cause, the bright-haired Saxon failed to appreciate the high honour intended for him, and made no due return of loyal love.

The enmity of numerous jealous rivals was as vainly opposed to William's destined fortune, and the very intrigues of her friends, and of corrupt agents at different courts, seemed put in motion only to facilitate in

[1] Wace; St. Benoit; Rob. of Gloucester; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham; Ypodigma.

the end that success at which the young duke aimed. He still pressed his suit, and held on undaunted, surmounting by degrees all the difficulties which stood between himself and his wished-for prize. Both after he had married, and when he could add the title of Conqueror to his name, he continued to sign himself "William the Bastard" upon all important occasions, without exhibiting the slightest repugnance to the title, for he felt that, if not by birth and courtesy, he was "illustrious" by his deeds.

Another impediment presented itself in the bulls of the papal court, which forbade the union of relatives within certain proscribed degrees. The lady Matilda and her resolute suitor, being first cousins, were placed in that predicament, but over this, as over all other obstacles, his firmness ultimately prevailed.

Towards the end of the seven years—a tolerably fair trial for one of William's vivacious temper—he began to think it was almost time to cut the Gordian knot, and is said to have had recourse to decided measures of a kind little calculated to insure a lady's love, either in ancient or in modern days. If we may rely upon contemporary records, the expedient he adopted was that of holding parley with the cold and haughty beauty as she returned from church, through the streets of her father's capital,[2] the then gay and bustling Bruges. Having reproached her for her long-continued scorn and cruelty, he seized her, we are told, and coolly rolled her in the mud, to the no small injury of her trim and costly attire. Then, after a few more striking proofs of his regard, which she must have sensibly felt from such a

[1] Ingerius Chron.; Thierry, Anglo-Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; W. Malms.; Walsingham; Wace; St. Benoit.

hand, the lover rode away at full speed, leaving her to account for this novel mode of courtship as best she could.[3]

It is, however, only just to William's character, to add that this very unedifying anecdote is of doubtful authenticity; or, if not wholly apocryphal, it must have been much exaggerated by the busy and scandal-loving pens of its reporters, especially of Ingulphus. Yet we are gravely informed that this singular mode of courtship was attended with the desired success. Convinced for the first time of the violence, if not the delicacy, of the duke's passion, the lady as well as her friends thought it politic to regard his suit with a more favourable eye. Whatever degree of credit may be attached to this transaction, it appears that, within a short period from the date assigned to it, the day was actually appointed for the nuptials of the princely cousins.

The scene of the ensuing festivities is stated to have been William's own castle of Augi, whither the bride was conducted by the earl her father, who presented her to her gratified lover, with rich and sumptuous gifts becoming such a bridal. The ceremony took place in presence of a numerous assemblage of Norman lords and prelates, with "store of ladies bright" from the surrounding states and cities, and was accompanied with all the pomp and circumstance of baronial sway which marked the dawn of the feudal era.[4] Already

[3] In that useful and elaborate work, *L'Art de Vérifier les Dates*, we meet with a rather different version of this strange exploit. William is stated to have repaired in haste to Lisle, and there, forcing his way into the chamber of the lady, dragged her by her tresses, inflicting a severe chastisement, and even trampling her under his feet.—L'Art de Vérifier &c. T. xiii. p. 14, 15 ; Chron. de Nor. ; Vie du Duc Guillaume.

[4] Wace ; Roman de Rou ; Chron. de Nor. ; Nouvelle Histoire de Nor. ; Sismondi ; Walsingham ; St. Benoit.

were the gorgeous fictions and shows of the impassioned East beginning to be transferred into Europe by aid of the Moors, and those adventurous pilgrim knights of different orders, among whom the bold ambitious Normans held no inferior rank.

By this alliance, so magnificently celebrated with the court of Flanders, then in high repute, William consolidated his power at a juncture when men's energies were newly awakened. Amid the wisest and bravest by whom he was surrounded, he was eager to approve himself fearless and unrivalled in the field, if not the most eminent among the able and accomplished statesmen of that eventful and enterprising age.

At the close of these nuptial festivities, sanctioned by the presence of princes, and the envoys of several kings, the duke, accompanied by his accomplished bride, made a progress through his states, in order that she might receive the homage of all his vassals: he subsequently held his open court at Rouen.[5]

It was extremely unfortunate that at such a moment, when all seemed to promise a happy and brilliant future, a source of disquietude should spring up from a quarter whence it could least have been expected. The haughty archbishop, William's uncle, exasperated at some fancied slight, proceeded without ceremony to excommunicate the newly-wedded cousins upon the plea of their too close consanguinity; an objection which he might have discovered a little earlier. The duchess Matilda, he now found out, was grand-daughter to Eleanor, William's aunt, an offence which, in his eyes, could only be expiated by instant separation, and which subjected her to the dreaded ban against inces-

[5] Wace; Roman de Rou; St. Benoit; Nouvelle Histoire de Nor.; Vie du Duc Guillaume; Abbé Prévost.

tuous intercourse. He argued that, the daughter of Richard the Good having married a Count of Flanders, Baldwin le Barbu, William and Matilda, being direct branches of this union, were cousins within the prohibited degrees.

For some time William sought to appease the angry prelate by contributions to the church; but in vain he founded charitable societies and erected new churches for the edification of Rouen, Caen, Bayeux, and Cherbourg. Threats were equally vain, and the duke had at length recourse to a higher tribunal, in the shape of an appeal to his Holiness of Rome, and he found an agent both able and willing to take upon himself the management of so responsible and delicate a charge.

It is at this period that the name of the celebrated Lanfranc first emerges into public notice. William had sufficient judgment to discern his uncommon merit; he was anxious to avail himself of his counsel, and assured him that he felt the fullest confidence in his skill and prudence, when entrusting to him the conduct at the papal court of a cause in which both himself and his consort were so deeply interested. He stated that the motives of his refractory uncle were private pique and malice, on account of the discomfiture of the earl, his brother, and his (the duke's) own success; that the archbishop was, moreover, extremely incensed, because, forsooth, the nuptials had been celebrated in the very castle of his aspiring brother, whom this turbulent prelate had hoped to see enter Arques the conqueror of his rightful prince and the betrayer of his country.

These representations, powerfully recommended by the eloquence of Lanfranc, were completely successful. Pope Victor, aware that a dissolution of William's

marriage would be the signal for new civil wars, and endanger the influence of the papal see throughout the Norman states, and anxious to oblige a prince who evinced so much deference for his authority, hastened to grant a full dispensation. It was accompanied with a special proviso, at the suggestion probably of Lanfranc, that William and his consort should each erect, in addition to an hospital for a hundred poor, an abbey for the religious of their respective sex, which being done he would absolve them from all evil consequences attaching to their imputed fault.

Never, perhaps, were two abbeys founded with more zeal, than upon this occasion. The duchess Matilda was more especially happy, in having a new opportunity to indulge her favourite taste for architecture. Both edifices were erected in the vicinity of Caen, that founded by the duchess, for the reception of women, being dedicated to the Holy Trinity;[6] the other, consisting of the duke's expiatory offering, for the men, was consecrated to St. Stephen, within the precincts of which William had also the pleasure of raising a royal palace,[7] as a more modern and pleasant residence, than the gloomy iron-visaged castle, for himself and his lovely consort.

It is not surprising that the first abbot of St. Stephen should have been the learned Lanfranc himself, before only a simple Italian monk of Bec, who had brought the delicate question of consanguinity to so happy a conclusion. From that period we trace his rapid rise to the highest honours; he became the confidential counsellor of his prince, the future preceptor and minis-

[6] Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

[7] Ducarel; Montfaucon; Vestigia Ang.; Monasticon.

ter of his sons, and was, soon after the Conquest, dignified with the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury.

The duke had little occasion to seek for grounds of retaliation upon the prelatical relative who had thus attempted to wound his peace, on a point where he was so susceptible, from his long and ardent affection for his consort. The strange and profligate conduct of Mauger was at length carried to such a height, in his advancing years, as to call for punishment and give his nephew ample scope for administering the severity of discipline,[8] without appearing at the same time to act a tyrannical part. He permitted him to run his own course till he had rendered himself amenable to the ecclesiastical laws. The infatuated prelate, forgetful of his past fame and wisdom, which had shed light even upon the path of the young Conqueror,[9] furnished abundant reasons for applying the ducal power to arrest him in his wild and reckless career. He lavished his revenues upon the most worthless characters; kept the most licentious and abandoned company; converted the sacred vessels into the means of inebriation; dissipated the holy relics; and, finally, played such fantastic tricks as to call for the interference of the State. In 1055,[1] William summoned a convocation of bishops at Lisieux, before whom Mauger was accused of manifold crimes and misdemeanors, even to pilfering the consecrated vessels to supply his extravagances. He was formally deposed from his office, to which Maurilliers was chosen in his room.[2]

[8] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. Malms.; Tyrrell; Rapin; Kennett.

[9] By the counsel he gave William to apply for aid to the king of France; an essential service, which probably rendered his nephew so long tolerant of his errors and misconduct.

[1] Sir H. Nicholas; Chron.; L'Art de Vérifier les Dates.

[2] Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. Malms.; Montfaucon; Rapin; Henry; Tyrrell; Kennett.

Stripped of all his ill-worn splendour, it is reported that he repaired to the isle of Guernsey, where he became acquainted with a young woman named Gillé, by whom he had several children.[3] Owing to his extreme eccentricity, and the number of mischievous plots and intrigues in which he was engaged, the people believed that he possessed, or was possessed by, a familiar demon, who called himself "Thouret," and who enabled him to predict future events.

William, it thus appears, exhibited as much resolution in repressing the excesses and curbing the power of his great prelates as he had already done in subduing his feudal barons. He was now anxious to delegate his authority to hands which might strengthen his government, and serve to promote his views of aggrandisement and his love of sway. His maternal uncle, Odo, was a man of singular energy and talent, notwithstanding all his prelatic vices, rapacity and oppression; and he soon became instrumental in promoting William's designs. On the death of Raoul de Dol, bishop of Bayeux, he was appointed by the Council to that see, and in the discharge of its duties displayed his public spirit, his patronage of art and learning, and especially his love of architecture, with splendid specimens of which he ornamented his diocese, to the no small delight and admiration of the duchess Matilda and her beloved consort.

But, while peacefully engaged in adorning no less than consolidating his ducal government, William was roused to action by new alarms which threatened him on the side of France. The extension of the Norman territory

[3] One of his illegitimate sons became a great soldier, known as Michael de Bayeux; joined the Normans in Italy; attended the prince of Antioch in his grand expedition; and distinguished himself in the holy wars. His other sons also rose to eminence.

at the expense of Anjou, the close alliance with England and other powers, and, more than all, his intimate connexion with the reigning family of Flanders, gave extreme umbrage to the French monarch. He regarded with just fears a vassal, who, within so brief a period, had made such rapid strides to empire. His nobles, still smarting under the disgrace sustained at Arques, and eager to retrieve their reputation, while they deprecated the former wars, now described the Normans in the most revolting colours, as a nation of pirates, intent only upon plunder, addicted to riot and excess of every kind, without excepting even their priests. Plans were proposed to restrain their ambition by exciting the enmity of other states; a sufficient proof how much they were feared. Henry was advised to take advantage of the first crisis, and, by striking a decisive blow, to annex the Norman dukedom to the French crown. Flattered with the idea, that weak monarch, forgetting the repeated disasters and mortifications which he had suffered,[4] hoped to achieve an exploit reserved for one of his successors.

France once more rang from end to end with the alarum of war. All aids were put into requisition for the invasion of Normandy. The various powers in alliance with the French court were invited by fresh offers to join in the undertaking; and Henry set forward at the head of a numerous army, leaving a strong reserve and reinforcements to follow. He disguised his real

[4] In 1053, Henry supplied William, count of Arques, with a large force; but, on learning that he was defeated by the duke, the king made a hasty retreat. In 1054 was fought the battle of Val de Dunes, in which king Henry's brother was defeated by Roger de Mortimer and Robert count d'Eu. Again the king retired on the approach of the Normans.—Ducarel; Nor. Antiq. fol. i.

object, under the plea of restoring to the Earl of Anjou the territories of which William had unjustly deprived him; and the discomfited Martel was not slow in re-assembling his forces at Mantes, to join the French crusade against his envied rival.

William, meanwhile, was not idle; nor was he again taken by surprise. Too much of a statesman to allow a grand confederacy, intended to hurl him from his dukedom and destroy him by one great effort, to reach maturity, he had already marshalled two powerful hosts composed of veteran soldiers, vassals, and free bands, drawn to his banners by the fame of his previous victories. Besides these, he had a large body of knights and barons, especially of the young nobility, whom he had invited from Italy. At the head of one force he suddenly appeared before Evreux, to oppose the king; the other he intrusted to his relative, the Count d'Eu,[5] with instructions to occupy the district of Caux, before

[5] Some chroniclers and historians have expressed doubts with regard to the identity of this relation of duke William—was he his half-brother, another of Arlette's sons, or the famous Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who in his temporal capacity now bore that name? He often exchanged the crozier for the sword, and fought like a gallant chief of the church militant for his warlike nephew. This is the more probable, from the fact that, at the battle of Hastings, he acted as the duke's aide-de-camp, and performed prodigies of valour. He outshone all the warlike prélates of his age, and at the memorable battle of empires, the Pharsalia of modern times, contributed to turn the fortune of the day. Some other writers contend that this count d'Eu was a younger half-brother of William, named Robert, who served under the famous Roger de Mortimer, by whom he was accompanied in this splendid campaign, being considered by William too young to be intrusted with the chief command. It is recorded, to the honour of William, that he uniformly promoted his poorer relatives by the mother's side, while he repressed the pride of his paternal uncles, cousins, and minor connexions to an unlimited extent.—Duchesne; Chron de Nor.; W. Malms.; W. Pict.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham; Sismondi; Thierry.

the arrival of the French monarch's brother, earl Eude. This invasion was a fresh signal for the disaffected to join the French standard; men who, descended from the first dukes of Normandy, could, if foiled, still pursue, like Buzaz and Warling, their adventures with Guiscard and his freebooters of the South. It was well for these turbulent spirits that they had such a resource, as they proved to be completely overmatched by the superior energy infused by William into the breasts of his adherents. It was in this spirited campaign that the names of the counts de Longueville, of Guiffard, of Gurnay, and De Crespin, became distinguished like those of their subsequently famous descendants in the annals of our Anglo-Norman houses. These chiefs made gallant head against the French king's brother, while the duke pushed his foraging parties close to the walls of Mantes, carrying off everything that could favour the progress of the enemy, and threatening his communication on the side of the Seine.

Earl Eude, Henry's general, was meanwhile resting supinely in the rich abundant district around Lyons; or, in the words of the Norman chronicle, "feeding upon the fat of the land." At Mortimer-sur-Andelle, he found ample forage of all kinds, and in the idea that William was yet far distant, at Evreux, continued to enjoy his pleasant position, and made "grand cheer." Little did he dream that he was within a single day's march of the active Guiffard. That able leader surprised and routed him with immense slaughter, took all his baggage and booty, besides a number of noble prisoners, and left 10,000 dead upon the field of battle.

Upon receiving tidings of this signal victory, William, still burning with resentment at the treachery of the

French king, could not forbear indulging his satiric vein at his old ally's expense. Well assured that Henry would not venture beyond the walls of Mantes, he sent him the following alarming verses, copies of which were distributed about the gates to acquaint him with the extent of the disaster. They are curious, as exhibiting a solitary specimen of his powers of composition on the spur of the moment; happy if he had always contented himself with this kind of political vengeance upon the head of a fallen adversary.

"Réveillez vous, et vous levez,
Guerriers qui trop dormi avez;
Allez bientôt voir vos amis
Que les Normands ont a mort mis
Entre Ecouys et Mortimer;
Là vous convient les inhumer."

Awake, arouse from sluggard sleep,
Bold warriors, who no vigils keep!
Ye doze too long; your friends await,
In bloody shroud, your aid too late.
All done to death by mortal spear
Between Ecouys and Mortimer.
Go, haste to deck their funeral bier,
Who fell while you were slumbering here.

Norman historians give us a lively picture of Henry's terror, and the consternation which seized his army, upon receiving this announcement of the misfortune which had befallen him. The ironical verses were repeated with bitter taunts by his lords and vassals, as well as by the inhabitants. The king was among the first to set the example of flight, and the town resembled a place taken by storm, in the eagerness of his troops to evacuate it. Count Eude, his brother, had owed his safety only to the fleetness of his steed;[6] and,

[6] Other princes and nobles were not so fortunate; and among Wil-

joining the abject monarch, retreated by forced marches, harassed by William, who soon made ample reprisals upon the dominions of his enemy. He recovered the territories formerly occupied by Henry; laid siege to the fortress of Tillieres, the boundary he had so long coveted, and to preserve which he now erected the new castle of Breteuil.

Alarmed for his own dominions, the panic-stricken monarch offered other advantages if the duke would advance no farther. Sensible of the sound military policy of presenting a golden bridge to a powerful enemy in retreat, William resolved not to push his good fortune too far, and was secretly rejoiced to listen to the king's terms. A peace was concluded; it was ratified in 1059, and ensured to him enlarged territories, and the reputation of a prudent statesman as well as of a successful soldier.

Nor was the decided success of this campaign, so brilliant a triumph over the united force of France and its allies, of less importance to his future undertakings. Without the fame and advantages which it conferred upon him in the eyes of European princes, it is hardly probable that he would have ventured to contest the sovereignty of England with the warlike and experienced Harold. As it was, his two most powerful neighbours now lay at his mercy, and he took advantage of this commanding position to introduce an express stipulation into the ensuing treaty, that neither should afford aid to the other in bearing arms against him.

liam's prisoners was Guy, count de Ponthieu, one of the duke's inveterate adversaries, who was conducted with others a prisoner to the fortress of Caen, where he remained upwards of two years.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Wace; Walsingham.

Thus, instead of urging them to extremities, William preferred to convert them, as far as possible, into allies, and to avail himself of their resources for his own aggrandisement in some future undertaking. From this period he assumed the marked influence over them and other neighbouring princes which enabled him to lay the foundations of that greatness to which he subsequently rose. His plans were deliberately formed, well matured, and, as such, calculated to ensure success and to maintain what he had won. His profound policy and moderation in triumph made him a conqueror in its true sense; and he merited the title. Few possessed a greater mastery over their passions; few knew better how to mask their real views, or to sacrifice present advantages for the attainment of some greater ulterior object.

It was this lofty self-control which, in the early part of his career, gave William that remarkable power of adapting his conduct to circumstances, of arriving at the results of deliberate judgment upon the spur of occasion, and of always deciding "for the best" with promptness and with vigour. He could dissemble with every appearance of frankness and good faith, and, while actuated by no generous motives, display a clemency and magnanimity to which, judging from his subsequent actions, his heart appears to have been a stranger. Doubtless such motives of policy now induced him to give up his numerous prisoners, and, with few exceptions, without ransom, stipulating only that those of higher rank should defray the charges of their subsistence.[7]

[7] We are informed by the careful chronicler of the duke's conduct upon this occasion, that the captive earls each paid ten florins per diem, the barons six, the knights four, and the squires only two. This respective ratio conveys no bad idea of their relative importance and mode of

It is a singular coincidence that, at the close of this brilliant campaign, and the subsequent peace with France, William stood in precisely the same position with regard to the Earl of Anjou as that lord occupied when he had entered into a separate treaty with Henry at his great rival's expense. But the duke was too prudent to follow the example set him by Martel, of indulging his anger and violence to the jeopardy of his own interests. He pursued his usual enlightened policy, making the victory of Mortimer only another stepping-stone to his vaulting ambition. He held out the hand of amity to his most bitter and malignant foe; and finally succeeded in humbling him into the subordinate rank of one of his great vassals, and the heir of the redoubtable earl commanded a division at the battle of Hastings.

The death of the Count de Maine, who left William his heir, about this period, threatened to counteract this adroit policy, by reviving his old rival's claims. Geoffrey Martel had deprived count Herbert of a large portion of his territory after the betrothal of that lord's daughter to the duke's eldest son, Robert, being exasperated at the transfer of allegiance from Anjou to Normandy, and at his own exclusion from any share in the succession. At this juncture, William seized upon the capital and reinforced it with a strong Norman garrison. The entire country submitted, and, having received the homage of the nobles and the people,[8] William left Mans and his newly acquired territory without having once drawn the sword, thanks to the

living, as well as the position which they occupied in the social scale of their day.

[8] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Chron. de Nor.; Wace; Walsingham.

promptness and decision of his movements.[9] It was in vain that earl Walter, another aspirant to the earldom, called upon Geoffrey, the nephew of the famous Geoffrey Martel, who no longer appeared in the field, to do him justice as his new lord paramount. The earl was himself a vassal, and after some feeble efforts, Walter, compelled to surrender the entire territory to the duke, resigned all his pretensions, and on that condition was received into favour, and permitted to retain his former hereditary possessions.

Nearly at the same period, (1063-4), the duke had to encounter another and more troublesome domestic foe in the person of Gauthier, count de Vexin. Instigated by the Counts de Mayence and Hubert de St. Luzanne, to question William's title, he was further abetted by the new count of Anjou. Falsifying his oath of fealty, Anjou at length placed himself at the head of the conspirators,[1] rejoiced to measure his strength in the open field with his great predecessor's most formidable enemy. Fortune for a time seemed to smile upon his desperate effort; he succeeded in reoccupying Mans, and boldly marched upon Ambrieres, which had been hastily garrisoned by William Fitzosborne. The death of Margaret, princess of Maine, affianced to prince Robert, proved not less injurious to the interest of the duke, but it could not daunt him, nor dim the lustre of that star which threw light upon his path to higher fortunes.

He met and routed his younger rival of Anjou as he had before done his more celebrated uncle. Having

[9] W. Pict.; Gest. Gal. Ducis, &c.; W. of Malms.; Hist. de Nor.

[1] W. of Malms.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Mazeres; Thierry; Sismondi.

beaten the confederated factions in several conflicts, he drove them before him, and recovered the whole of Maine with its capital. He demolished its fortifications, disarmed the insurgents, and returned in triumph to pursue his ulterior object of concentrating his military strength and extending his resources. This he effected by fostering commercial enterprise and the useful arts in the sea-port towns, and in the rich agricultural districts of central Normandy.

Never was the wisdom of such measures in the duke's actual circumstances more strikingly manifested than at that period. Scarcely had he succeeded in organising a more powerful and imposing force, than another daring and combined attempt was made by young Martel, aided by numbers, jealous like himself of the duke's continued good fortune, and eager to deprive him of the fruits of his hard-won honours.[2] Some contemporary writers[3] declare that the young earl was at the head of one hundred thousand men, a force which he must have been fortunate or able indeed to assemble, after so recent a discomfiture by his powerful enemy. The numbers are doubtless greatly exaggerated, or they must have given William more serious trouble than they appear to have done. It was intended that king Henry should join the new confederacy; but, as if to give a fresh impulse, as he had ever done, to William's

[2] In 1059 or 1060, it is asserted, but without much foundation, that the duke was present at the coronation of his lord paramount, Philip I., attended by a magnificent retinue, as the head of the great vassals of the French crown. In 1062, it is added, he received Harold at his court. In 1068, Alfonso, the king of Castile, sent an embassy to solicit the hand of his daughter.

[3] See Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne, apud Mazeres; W. Pict., &c.

special good fortune, he died exactly in time to prevent any junction taking place, in August, 1060.

The duke entered upon his new campaign with spirit. He made Falaise the centre of his operations, and, pursuing his system of flying columns, sought to amuse the enemy till he was enabled to strike some signal and decisive blow. He always watched, as at Hastings, for the commission of some error on the part of the enemy of which to take advantage; and, if it were not offered, he had skill and tact enough to provoke it. While harassing the confederate earls by this system of desultory warfare, he gained strength and wasted their resources. His skill in wielding detached bodies was equal to his power of directing masses. He thus devastated the line of the enemy's march, reducing them to extreme want, and attacking them with his bowmen and light troops, both in flank and rear. Young as William yet was, his consummate art in war was the result of long experience and years of continual peril and action. This superior knowledge enabled him to adopt all the advantages of a guerilla system, even in open plains, and at a period when it was comparatively little known and less practised, except in the Spanish wars with the Moors of the South. Though at the head of twenty thousand men, the duke was unwilling to trust the issue to a general battle, till the favourable moment arrived, and he could attack the combined host with full promise of success. Young Martel penetrated as far as Bayeux, thence to Caen, and, passing the Orne and the Dive, ravaged the country with his mercenary hordes, and threatened to lay Rouen itself under contribution.

At length the wished-for moment for a general action

arrived. By a forced march the duke entered the valley of Bavent, took his powerful enemies by surprise; and, by the brilliant victory of Varaville in 1061, was in a position to dictate the most humiliating terms to his haughty rivals. So great was the multitude of prisoners that, we are assured, the Normans, like the English at Agincourt, were alarmed at their prodigious number; for all the confederate leaders were either taken or slain. Barons and earls of different states;—the counts de Meulan, de Roussi, and de Soissons, with the famed Buzas, the great scourge of the Normans, were all in the hands of the victorious duke,[4] awaiting the doom they had so inconsiderately provoked.

With the exception of Hastings, this terrific battle, followed by such a victory, was the most important in its results of any in which William was ever engaged. The eyes of Europe were now directed towards him, as the bravest and most accomplished prince of his times, and the most skilful and fortunate of all European commanders. He had attained the high reputation foretold by the most formidable and able of his numerous competitors, the unfortunate Earl of Anjou. He had shown that, by the exhaustless resources of his military genius, he could defend Normandy, through a series of splendid campaigns, against large bodies of troops greatly superior to his own, led by chiefs, before unrivalled, boasting every advantage of external aid and civil discord.

[4] We are told that Geoffrey, the young leader of the confederated bands, was seized with such despair upon seeing the numbers slain by the Norman spear and bowmen, that he fought his way to the bridge, in the hope of repairing it before the whole of his splendid host should be destroyed. But in this he was foiled, being compelled to leave his veterans a prey to the sword of the victorious Norman.—Duchesne; Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Ord. Vit.; Robert of Gloucester.

William was only in the 38th year of his age when he obtained this crowning triumph of his cause, that promised to put a period to the fierce border struggles in which he had been so long engaged. An immediate peace with his humbled rivals, with fresh advantages beyond his most sanguine hopes, were the first fruits of his happy fortune. At the court of France it produced the most favourable influence, as regarded his future operations; it created a respect amounting to awe, especially when looking back at the numerous and severe defeats which the French armies had sustained —a lesson that forms the best safeguard for the fidelity of a too powerful ally. Philip I., Henry's successor, found himself in the same circumstances as William had formerly been, in regard to that monarch's father; and the son of the treacherous guardian now stood with relation to William, still more at his mercy, without any such claims upon the Norman duke as had the latter upon the forbearance, or gratitude, of Henry.

It is interesting to observe what was the conduct pursued by William towards the son of his false-hearted guardian in these circumstances, when newly flushed with conquest, at the head of a powerful veteran army, and master of the most warlike states in Europe. His conduct was, doubtless, actuated by policy; but it was enlightened policy, which is real humanity. Burying the remembrance of past feuds and differences, he held out the hand of amity to the young king. Terms of peace were gladly accepted by the new regency, at the head of which was Baldwin, earl of Flanders, the father of William's consort.

Thus intimately allied with the courts of France and Flanders, it became an easy task for so politic a states-

man and warrior to crush the spirit of insubordination, and unite the discordant elements of his power in one harmonious and effective rule. He had extended, as well as consolidated, his dominions by the annexation of the important county of Maine; and its bishop Ernaut, attended by all the prelates and barons, with crozier and banners, came forth to receive and swear fealty to their future sovereign.[5] The French regency had soon reason to congratulate itself upon its amicable relations with William, who showed himself a real guardian of the interests of the young king. A formidable revolt broke out in the south, the Gascons refusing to acknowledge the authority of the regency, and to do homage to the crown. Baldwin raised an army under pretext of marching against the Moors in Spain, of which he invited the duke to assume the command. He consented, and, taking the insurgents by surprise, occupied the whole of Gascony and Languedoc, speedily receiving the submission of the refractory states. This he effected without engaging in a single act of hostility, or meeting with any armed resistance to the orders of the government which he represented.

On his return into Normandy, the duke devoted his attention to restoring law and justice, and amalgamating the interests of his new states. He had to repair the effects of baronial turbulence, rivalry, and dissen-

[5] The fate of its former master, Martel, the unfortunate Earl of Anjou, was a singular one. That great leader never recovered the shock of his fallen fortunes; he renounced his title and estates in favour of his nephew, and assumed the habit of a monk in the gloomy cloisters of St. Nicholas at Angers. There he died, after a short noviciate of only six months, and was succeeded in the territories that remained to him by Geoffrey le Barbu, and by his nephew Fouqué, son of his sister and Alan, count of Gastines in Poitou.

sion; of long, exhausting conflicts; and of the mutual hatred and aggressions of his relatives and the great earls. To bring under the general authority of a fixed government so many incongruous and conflicting elements was no common task. He had to make submissive subjects out of turbulent lords and petty vassals, already habituated to a system of feudal rights and adventurous freedom which left a sovereign little but the name. He was only the chief feudal lord, with less real power than many of his great vassals; and this was especially the state of the feudal laws in France, from which those of Normandy were derived, and to which the circumstances of the country had given increased force.

This invasion of the sovereign prerogative the genius of William could ill brook; and he took the most cautious, yet firm and deep-rooted measures, to counteract the bold and growing encroachments of baronial sway. That he effected his object, and rendered them not only submissive, but instrumental in promoting his future aggrandisement, forms his highest praise as a statesman. He carried to its highest pitch the sovereign authority, as exercised under the feudal institutions then in progress, and by its severe discipline he may justly be averred to have caused that necessary reaction, which finally gave a *magna charta* to the nobles and to the people of England.

Nor was the duke less successful in re-establishing general peace and order, renewing charters to the chief towns, and those trading privileges to the "notables" from which he trusted to receive resources in case of need. He carefully encouraged these powers of industry, as some equipoise to the overweening ambition and feudal oppression of the lords of the soil. He effected

such other useful alterations in the military tenures, from the serf to the vassal and the upper lords, as were calculated to limit the rule of each by rendering them in some measure amenable to his "ducal council." His great prelates were by degrees brought to acquiesce in the same system of responsibility to the government of the State; insomuch that, while artfully engaged in extending his own prerogatives, William was really laying a foundation for the future greatness and prosperity of his people.

He next cleared his territories of all the "mercenaries,"—those free, vagrant bands of adventurers, called into action, and pouring in from all quarters, whenever there was a fresh division of the spoils of war.

Other fomenters of discord and intrigue, employed by foreign powers, in the shape of spies—the wandering minstrels, called "gleemen and *trouveurs*,"—were subjected to the "watch and strict discipline" of a newly-organised police. For, though fond of sometimes indulging a satiric and even ribald vein at the expense of his royal contemporaries, he had too often experienced its bad effects upon popular opinion to permit its unrestricted circulation in the satiric poems or humorous ballads of the day. Indeed, his edicts at this time, as subsequently in England, all aimed at the repression of licence both in words and acts—a laudable restriction, but which, carried beyond certain bounds, is apt to degenerate into a mere instrument for the purposes of arbitrary rule. It had the effect at this time of checking personal violence, and exterminating that petty system of robbery and spoliation, considered by the great earls and barons as one of their rights over their unfortunate vassals and serfs of the land. Nor was the

benefit of such measures confined to this result; for they tended gradually to raise up a secondary class of proprietors, vassals, and dependents; alleviating, in some degree, the weight of a feudal chain so oppressive as that in France, and so injurious to the real sovereign power.

It was thus that the duke strengthened the hands of his government by securing the preponderance of more general laws. The national character now rose into importance; no longer the resort of outlaws, pirates, and depredators of all kinds, Normandy assumed its rank, and soon took the lead in the race of European nations. Towns were extended, public works established, industry and commerce began to dawn. So great was the magic effect of one vigorous and enlightened mind, while intent at the same time upon its own particular interests and aggrandizement.

The great qualities, too, of William as a ruler, were exhibited at this period of his career, divested of those darker shades of character which insatiable ambition and avarice, gorged with human spoil, afterwards threw around them. It was not yet his object to provoke those public insurrections, which, affording a plea for confiscation, excited the worst passions of a conqueror; led him to aim at the establishment of a stern, unrelenting despotism, and presented, in a country which he vainly sought to subdue, the singular anomaly of a constitutional form of government, and acknowledged free laws in the hands of the absolute ruler of a minor state.[6]

To give authority to his new plans of government and police, the duke next summoned a "general council"

[6] Alison; Brodie; Smythe; Lingard; Mackintosh; Henry.

at Caen—the model, doubtless, of the *commune Concilium*, as distinct from the ducal "private council" as that of the "magnates," or barons and prelates; and closely analogous to those popular assemblies which gradually acquired the powers and privileges of our modern parliament. It consisted of the different orders of the States; namely, of archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, &c.; of earls, counts, barons, knights, &c.; and of the notables or chief burgesses, the deputies of the principal towns.[7] Investing it with the solemn character of a religious festival, he consecrated the State compact with the holy relics of Saints Ouen and Romain, being well aware of the efficacy of such a religious bond in producing the zeal and enthusiasm conducive to the ulterior objects he had in view.

Nor did the civil arrangements adopted on this occasion less display William's careful attention to two essential points, namely, the increasing of his revenues, and enforcing obedience to the laws. A compact body of archers, part of his new police, had orders to traverse the city during the continuance of the sittings of the "States," from the Wednesday evening to the ensuing Monday, the better to preserve public order and decorum. He sought to inspire the people with becoming respect for a national spectacle so imposing, and for the religious ceremonies, towards which he evinced so politic a reverence, as never to omit them upon any serious occasion. In the present case, it was decreed that, upon any interruption of the solemn deliberations, the offenders were to be arrested, fined, and imprisoned. Nay, in aggravated instances of insubordination, they were to be

[7] Thierry; Sismondi; Walsingham; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

excommunicated until the time when they or their friends could pay into the ducal exchequer the sum of ten livres (tournois) or smaller amounts, proportioned to the offence, at the discretion of his brother Odo, then bishop of Bayeux.

The period during which the people were amenable to this edict, was emphatically termed *le temps de trêve*—a season of truce, more favourable to the ducal finances than to the pockets of the good people of Rouen.

The great prelates and barons, on their side, were sworn over the holy relics to observe the ordinances applying to them,[8] a ceremony not performed without some reluctance, calculated, as it evidently was intended, to define and limit their authority, while it added to the power of the government and the safety of the State. The ordinances[9] emanating from this assembly convey a characteristic idea of the Norman laws of that period. Based upon military order, and that regard for severe

[8] One of these edifying ordinances runs as follows :—"All abbots and country prelates shall henceforth reside in the town nearest to their own abbeys, forasmuch as it is a great scandal to the people to see them *running about as they are wont to do.*

"2nd. Every night the great bell shall be rung throughout each parish, to admonish every one to worship God, and close his house, instead of running about the streets.

"3rd. Henceforward all robbers, murderers, and malefactors, shall be punished with the utmost rigour of the laws, to be put in force by a regular criminal process."

Other laws, of a like repressive character, both civil and criminal were passed upon this interesting occasion.—*Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Mazeres.*

[9] The Norman curfew, among these, oppressive and tyrannical as it appears to us, was no solitary example, the custom being generally prevalent in Spain and other countries. It was highly useful to the system established by William, and was long enforced under the name o the ordinance *du couvre feu*, or putting out the fire.

discipline inherent in the feudal system, they bound the sovereign lord not less than his great vassals and the whole people, in one extensive chain, insomuch that, without an impulse given to the entire body, and the consent of the subordinate parts, no suzerain or supreme head could venture to carry his designs into execution.

The Norman curfew was another, but by no means a new device, forming part of the general laws; nor was it afterwards established in England by the duke as a conqueror, solely with a view of holding the people in subjection, but a regulation of police intended to prevent popular disorders, and professedly to enforce the observance of prayer, moral restraint, and good manners.

The nearest approach to it, in our own times, is found in the injunctions conveyed in the royal proclamation at a coronation, and on other state occasions; and the tenor of it, as regards the support of public morals and decorum, was pretty much to the same effect.[1]

For the same reason the dukes of Normandy were accustomed to preside in person and administer justice, long after the age of Rollo in the law courts of that period, which, simple and rude as they were, enjoyed a higher reputation for the dispatch of public business than those of a later day.

It is mentioned by contemporary and other writers[2] that, to perpetuate the memory of this grand council, the duke caused to be erected a church, dedicated to that

[1] M. de Brâz.; Hist. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Abbé Prevost.

[2] M. de Bràz; Ducarel; Montfaucon; Vestigia Ang.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

rarest of all saints, lay or clerical, St. Peace,[3] an honour, however, of which that patron was subsequently deprived by St. Mark, from the circumstance of the religious processions of the town being assembled upon the latter saint's day.

That the duke left no means untried to give a religious sanctity as well as political importance to this great assembly of his States, is sufficiently evident from contemporary records, and from the fact of his having presided at it in person, accompanied by his accomplished and beloved consort, the duchess Matilda. Both also held courts upon the occasion, displaying a munificence calculated to confer lustre upon such an event. It was indeed the noblest mode of celebrating his signal victories, and of dedicating his legislative labours to St. Peace; labours by which he was recognised as the head of the Norman church, as well as of the State. That church he now rendered amenable to his feudal sway, while, by apparent concessions, he contrived to continue upon the best terms of amity with the papal court.

Undisputed master of the ducal throne, the heir of duke Robert fully displayed those refined tastes and that love of splendour and magnificence which had distinguished most of his predecessors, and became a powerful prince. He surrounded himself by men of high character and learning, among whom were Lanfranc and other distinguished foreigners, especially of Italy and Spain; he encouraged the liberal not less than the useful arts, and, induced by the example of his consort, joined her in founding many of those noble edifices and great public works, which have made the ecclesiastical

[3] This holy fane, vainly dedicated to St. Peace, was demolished by the Protestants in 1562. The walls are still to be seen.

and other antiquities of Normandy the admiration of modern times.

A series of court festivals gave fresh *éclat* to the meetings of the States; a splendidly furnished table was thrown open for the public entertainment during several days; and, to close the festivities, we are told,[4] a brilliant ball drew the beauty and chivalry of the surrounding counties to witness the celebration of these august patriotic rites. Such a tribute of allegiance and respect on the part of the high Norman dames—a sort of guarantee for the good conduct of their lords—thus for the first time paid to the court of William, showed the deep policy by which he was actuated in these religious and festive displays.

When the grand assembly broke up, not a little gratified with their courteous and hospitable reception by the duke and his consort, the prelates, barons, and burgesses took their leave to return to their respective towns and castles, not without abundant encomiums upon the noble qualities and princely hospitality of both.

The subsequent successes of William, on the side of Brittany, evinced equal statesmanship and soldierlike conduct. In 1065, having restored peace and discipline to his own dominions, he set out to adjust some differences which had arisen between his vassals, Alan and Yves, who had already appealed to the sword. The entire country was a prey to violence and faction, and their lord suzerain arrived at that critical juncture when the two armies stood in battle array, waiting but the signal for the onset.

The presence of the great Norman had an instanta-

[4] Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie; Chron. de Nor.; Vie du Duc Guillaume.

neous effect; both parties stood in more awe of him than of each other. The Bretons evinced their admiration of his exploits by loud shouts of applause; their weapons fell from their hands; and he was unanimously chosen the umpire of their disputed claims.[5] He is described by the historians as suddenly making his appearance, like a shepherd in a fold of lambs, scaring away the wolves, restoring order and disposing of the whole flock at his pleasure. In fact, he succeeded in reconciling the claims of his incensed relatives, less perhaps by his arguments or entreaties than by the force of his character and his commanding presence.

But it is our unpleasant duty, while attempting to do justice to the nobler traits and characteristics of this extraordinary man, to have to contrast them with conduct of a very opposite kind, of which he is recorded about this time to have been guilty. We are assured that, with many amiable and high qualities, the duchess Matilda was occasionally actuated by the same passions of avarice and revenge that subsequently cast their dark shadow over the fame of her illustrious consort. It is believed, that, instigated by some false accusations brought against them by their enemies, she conspired with Roger de Montgomery[6] to deprive the most noble

[5] W. of Malms.; Walsingham; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; St. More; Wace; Mazeres.

[6] With whom the duchess was accused, in her turn, of having been upon too intimate terms. But it is not improbable that there may have been stronger grounds for William's extreme harshness upon this occasion; for his was not a character to be lightly influenced by female arts to commit unjust or impolitic actions. The frequent conspiracies of his nobles, however, may have disposed him to give ear more readily to the accusations of persons interested in the destruction of their rivals—how much more so to those of one to whom he was so ardently attached as the fascinating duchess?

and faithful of William's adherents of their honour and their property. She denounced, as guilty of conspiracy against the duke's person and the State, the lords of Conches, Grentesmesnil, Montreuil, Echauffaur, and Robert Geroie, the abbot of St. Evreux. There appears sufficient reason to conclude that the charge was false; no evidence of their guilt, at all events, was adduced. The motives which actuated their accusers were, probably, avarice and malice, and the object, spoliation.

That a prince like William should so easily have fallen into the snare laid for him, not less than for the unhappy accused, is an imputation, we fear, rather upon his justice than upon his judgment, inasmuch as he reserved a large portion of the spoils for himself and his consort. Such a wholesale confiscation of estates, the banishment or voluntary exile of the accused, with the distribution of the property among their accusers, was nothing short of offering a premium upon perjury and falsehood; thus perilling the honour and the fidelity of those whose fortunes were bound up in his own, and whom he ought, in accordance with his true policy, to have been eager and zealous to vindicate. How serious a responsibility he incurred, by not more deeply investigating the evidence brought against them, or wilfully shutting his eyes to the truth, will soon appear by so flagrant an act of injustice recoiling upon the heads of its perpetrators. Many of the despoiled lords were compelled to seek support in the wars of Italy and Spain; and the unfortunate abbot also made an unwilling pilgrimage, the penalty of his having amassed too great a property. He proceeded to lay his complaints before the holy see; but his Holiness, Alexander, deeply

interested in the maintenance of the papal influence in Normandy, and in the future success of so politic a prince as William, declined to give any opinion, prudently referring him to his famous contemporary Guiscard, the head of the Norman refugees and adventurers in the South. That sovereign outlaw taking compassion upon the forlorn abbot, gave him a living in Calabria, or, according to some writers, near Brundusium, where he raised a new monastery beyond the reach of the duchess and her partisans, founded his order with eleven monks who followed him, and ruled over his little community in peace for the space of twenty-seven years.

Though aware of the injustice to which he had lent himself, William does not appear to have been guarded against similar intrigues on the part of his consort and a few favourite leaders, who had gained his confidence only to abuse it.

Thus encouraged by William's weakness or his avarice, Matilda did not hesitate at last to join the cabals of the son against the father, while her false-hearted confederates—for there is no clear evidence, in support of the rumour which represents them as her paramours—were the very men who broke their faith, and rose in arms against their master when enthroned King of England.

The duke himself, forgetting his earlier and nobler deeds, his true policy so gloriously pursued in those acts of magnanimity, which drew round him faithful hearts, and held Fortune spell-bound in his service, soon emulated so unhappy an example, and, from that fatal moment, his conquests were stained with tyranny and blood; his family happiness was embittered, his fond

confiding trust in the sole partner of his heart, was betrayed, and he ultimately became a passionate, vindictive, and gloomy despot.

Soon after the period of William's marriage, indeed, we trace a marked change in the character and objects of his pursuits. He became uxorious; seemed no longer to devote himself only to honour and reputation in the field; to be no longer liberal, free, and magnanimous in his actions. He evinced a more anxious and sordid spirit, while his avarice and love of aggrandizement were more strongly developed. Even the high qualities and accomplishments of a consort whom he so ardently loved, unaccompanied by a fine and lofty moral sense, or the restraining power of principle, based upon the true christian graces, were more dangerous than edifying to a character like that of the duke.

So great was the influence which this beautiful and brilliant-minded woman gradually acquired over him, to the future unhappiness and calamity of both, and which descended like an heirloom to all their race; and such his infatuation, that, soon after the Conquest he consented to indulge her worst passions in the commission of a crime of a still deeper dye. This was the confiscation of the entire property of the man to whom she had formerly been attached, the handsome Saxon noble, Brithric,[7] lord of Gloucester, who had declined her love, when ambassador at her father's court.

Not content with seizing his estates and with the ruin of his family, she caused the unfortunate earl

[7] Brithric Meaw, a Saxon earl, of large possessions and of distinguished merit. He had been sent by Edward the Confessor upon an embassy to the court of Flanders.—Chron. de Tewks.; Cotton MSS.; Monasticon; Leland; Thierry; Palgrave; Rise and Progress.

to be thrown into a dungeon, from which it is most probable he was delivered only by the dagger or the bowl. He was never afterwards heard of; and, had a noble so powerful and beloved died a natural death, the fact would have been recorded in our Saxon annals. The permission to wreak her full woman's revenge is of itself a stain upon the character of William, who, sharing in the plunder, gave his sanction to the deed. It was murder and robbery combined; there are no palliating circumstances to be pleaded by either; but it stands in startling relief, an enduring monument to posterity, that no rank and privileges can exempt evil-doers from the retributive vengeance which lives in the record of such a crime. It gave the English nobles and prelates a bitter foretaste of what they were to expect under the servitude which William and his Norman followers were destined to impose upon their country.[8]

These dark spots in the bright Norman sun, which rose with so much splendour, are here alluded to, because, from the date of the Conquest, which we now approach, we shall fail to discover in William's conduct and actions the same moderation, the same magnanimity in the hour of victory, the same clemency and generosity to the fallen, or that confidence in the fidelity of his followers, which distinguished his policy during his earlier Norman sway.

[8] Hallam, Hist. and Govern. of the Middle Ages, ii. 159.

CHAPTER IV.

Summary of William's policy—State of England—Circumstances favourable to his views of succession—State of parties—Merits of the rival aspirants—Question of hereditary right—Will of the sovereign—Of the people—Of relationship—Relative power—Advantages possessed by Harold—Fatal voyage to Normandy—Shipwreck—Reception at the Norman court—His detention by William—Ascendency acquired over him—Alarmed and allured into the duke's toils—Engaged in the duke's interests—Attends him in his campaigns—Is entertained at court—William offers Harold the hand of one of his daughters—Induces him to support his views—Compels him to swear upon the holy gospels—Harold's return to England—His imprudent measures—Death of Edward the Confessor—Accession of Harold—Conduct of William on this occasion—His wary policy—His resources—Extraordinary influence of his genius—Knowledge of character—Power of concentrating his energies and means—General assembly of the States—Great councils—Negotiations with France—Other States—The papal court—Preparation of his armaments—Regency of Normandy—Assembling of his fleets and armies—Sets sail for England—His landing—Battle of Hastings—Losses on both sides—Exaggerated statements—The Conqueror returns to his camp—Field of the Lake of Blood.

It would be unjust to describe the actions of William, as Duke of Normandy, without awarding to them their due meed of praise. A career so extraordinary and so brilliant, yet so free from those errors of conduct which sullied his reign over a greater and more powerful people, could only receive an accession of fame from his crowning victory at Hastings; a victory which made him the founder of an empire mightier than that of Charlemagne.

At the period of that memorable event, England seemed destined to fall a prey to contending factions,

which threatened to revive the heptarchy, or to extend the Danish sway from the Humber to the banks of the Thames.

The successful usurpation of Harold would have opened the way for a long series of wars, for all the inevitable ills of intestine division and civil conflicts. The insurrections already fomented by his brother, and fresh inroads of the Danish hosts, showed that no arm less strong than that of the famed Norman could have effectually repelled the tide of war from the British shores. If even invasions of the Scotch and the Welsh held the kingdom in continued alarm, ravaged its most fertile counties, and carried away its inhabitants as slaves, how difficult must it have been for Harold, in the face of legitimate claimants of the throne, and factions in alliance with foreign courts, to maintain his empire against so many enemies!

Had not so powerful an arbitrator then appeared upon the scene, that worst of all tyrannies, a weak monarchy, combined with a powerful oligarchy, to which the Anglo-Saxon government was fast approaching—a government to be dreaded from the oppressive spirit of its peculiar laws, would have undermined the free institutes of our Egberts and our Alfreds. Such an oligarchy is as adverse to the liberties as to the industry and prosperity of a people; it had sprung from military conquest, and was based upon the slavery of the masses. Its badge was serfdom, and its rule was anarchy, a conflict of the elements of which it was composed; and hence the incessant prevalence of internal wars and foreign invasions up to the period of the Conquest.[1] It

[1] Hallam; Brodie; Alison; Smythe's Lectures; Mackintosh; Henry; Lingard.

is a question if a strong government, ably though harshly administered by the victorious Norman, were not preferable to such a state of things. For so great was the love of freedom inherent in all classes above the serfs, as to resist his utmost efforts to establish a virtual despotism, under the guise of constitutional laws; a view of the Conquest which may afford some consolation for the cruelties and oppressions[2] at first perpetrated. Still it can form no justification for a ruler who professed to assume the sceptre by the free voice of the people, and who contracted a solemn obligation to govern by the existing laws, which he violated. He could not, however, so easily destroy the traditions and efface the recollections in which lay treasured up the future constitution of England.

The victory of Hastings was assuredly one of the most memorable actions known in ancient or modern times, whether we consider the relative strength of the parties, or the bravery, power, and resources of the Anglo-Saxons. A brief retrospect will convince us of the truth of this assertion, without alluding to the comparative ease with which William afterwards repressed the Norman insurrections, with the aid of only a few English troops.

The reception of the duke at the English court by Edward, with that monarch's grateful recollections of Normandy, independently of his aversion for the family of earl Godwin, were sufficient to raise in William no unreasonable hopes of the succession. Without children, Edward naturally directed his attention to a successor worthy of filling the throne. The death of his nephew

[2] Hallam; Brodie; Alison; Smythe's Lectures; Mackintosh; Henry; Lingard.

Edward, the son of his brother Edmund Ironside, left him free to make his own selection; for Edgar Atheling, the infant son of Edmund, was too young and of too feeble a character to be placed in competition with the avowed designs of Harold and the intrigues of his aspiring brother.[3] That in such circumstances he should have turned his eyes upon his near relative, the Duke of Normandy, as one who, from his high reputation and capacity, was able to arrest the ambition of the nobles, and avert the calamities of a war of succession, seems not only probable, but in unison with the whole tenor of his conduct, with the evidence of historic facts, and the isolated position in which he stood. There is enough of this circumstantial evidence to show his inclination to adopt William as his heir; and this the casual absence of any testamentary document cannot fairly impugn; for, though such might be his wishes, there were sufficient reasons why he should keep them secret, and not record them by a will, which might have endangered his life. It would, in fact, have been putting fresh weapons into the hands of Harold and his reckless partisans, and subjecting himself to fresh insults.

The only person stated to have been in the king's confidence was the well-known Robert, a Norman ecclesiastic of high family, whom he had raised to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury; and historians assert[4] that this prelate employed his influence with the king

[3] Earl Godwin and his sons justified themselves before the grand council of the nation against the criminal accusations of the Norman leaders, especially of the archbishop Robert. They were fully restored to all the honours and places of trust.—Haddon MS., with Authorities.

[4] Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; W. of Malms.; Wace; Walsingham; Prévost.

to prevail on him to appoint William his heir; that he was even sent by Edward to acquaint the duke with his determination in regard to the succession. His motives for deciding in William's favour are also specified,[5] while the indubitable marks of affection bestowed by him upon the Normans of every rank, in raising them to the first offices in the realm, prove how earnestly and sincerely he must have desired to prepare the way for the completion of his design.

Indeed, it is not improbable that, in the absence of the haughty and rebellious family of earl Godwin, whose usurpation of sovereign power[6] was confirmed by the daring, talent, and influence of the soldier-like Harold, the Norman duke might have quietly ascended the vacant throne, even without opposition from the lineal heir, the Saxon Edgar, and his two sisters, Christian and Margaret.

If duke William were really in possession of so important a secret confided to him by Edward, through his accredited agent the archbishop, he must have beheld, in brilliant perspective, the approaching realisation of his most aspiring wishes. The presumed title of itself, however, merely supplied him with an excuse to draw the sword, for he must have known that, in accordance with the Saxon laws, the will of the king was a

[5] W. Pict. 77; Ord. Vital. 492.

[6] It was farther decreed, that the Norman favourites, who had promoted discord and set the king against his natural subjects, should depart the land. The archbishop was exiled in the second year of his office, with all his Norman creatures, detested by the English. Edward gave his reluctant consent only on condition that Godwin deposited in his hands pledges of his future loyalty. These he sent into Normandy for safer custody. Hence the "fons malorum" of all that subsequently occurred.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

dead letter, without the accompanying consent of the nobles and the people.[7]

Another great obstacle presented itself in the actual power of Harold, his redoubtable military talents and his pre-occupation both of the throne and the field. These circumstances induced William to try every art of diplomacy, and to make every exertion to prejudice the claims of a subject, who presumed to arrogate an authority, to which not any noble of the realm had previously aspired. He was aware that, by earl Godwin's marriage with Thirra, king Canute's daughter, there was a numerous issue; and that, previously to the death of that earl, the high character and exploits of his son Harold, one of which was bearing arms against his sovereign, enabled that powerful noble to dictate his own terms, and in fact, to usurp the government of the country. Wessex, Essex, Kent, and Sussex, were all under the immediate rule of Harold; and he was high-steward of the royal household, an office of great influence and importance.[8] With equal ambition, he had greater talents, more noble and amiable qualities, than his father, though all his efforts were unsuccessful in removing the king's extreme aversion to the members of his family. He extorted however the appointment of his brother Tostig to the government of Northumberland; and, being perfectly aware of the views entertained by the Norman duke, he sought to strengthen his own cause by the marriage of this brother with the

[7] No historians, English or Norman, except William of Poitou (181, 191), pretend that William had the consent of the Estates; and he says that the donation was made by the advice of Edward's great men; for which there is no ground whatever.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

[8] Hume; Kennet; Henry; Lingard; Tyrrell; Eadmer; Hovedon Bromp.; S. of Durham; Bayeux Tapestry; W. Pict.

second daughter of the Earl of Flanders, in the hope doubtless of weakening his rival's influence in that quarter.

Harold, likewise, had omitted no means of ingratiating himself both with the nobles and the people; but there was one consideration which paralysed all his efforts. This was the hostages given to Edward for the fidelity of Godwin, and placed by him in the hands of the duke, namely, Harold's younger brother, Woolnoth, and his nephew Hacon; and he feared that, in the event of the King's death, William would employ his power over them to enforce his title to the crown. He also feared that he might proclaim himself the protector of Edgar Atheling, as the surest means of smoothing his own path to the throne. It was, consequently, his object to obtain their liberty during Edward's lifetime; and he represented to that monarch the inexpediency of leaving two noblemen so strongly attached to his person in the power of the Norman duke. Since the death of the earl his father,[9] it was added, such a step was more imperative, and, his application being couched in the form of a menace rather than of a request, the feeble monarch empowered Harold to negotiate for their exchange.[1]

Harold's subsequent voyage, his reported shipwreck

[9] A death reported to have been extremely sudden. He was seated at table with the king, and there being some question of his fidelity, the earl is said to have broken a piece of bread and prayed to God that it might choke him if he were a traitor. He fell back and expired.

[1] Harold possessed, in fact, the power of the king in Edward's lifetime; he was earl of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Somersetshire, Devon, and Cornwall; all which, however, like the royal dignity itself, were in the nature of an office, not hereditary, but disposable, and had been enjoyed before by his father.—Haddon, MSS., B.M.

upon the coast, in 1064, and his courteous detention in the hands of William, who declined to comply with the object of his mission, form strong presumptive evidence of Edward's want of good faith towards Harold, notwithstanding his pious title of Confessor. That in this embassy he was playing the royal game into the hands of the duke of Normandy there seems little reason to doubt. The splendid retinue of Harold, as depicted in the Bayeux tapestry, the number of vassals, intended to impress William with a sense of his influence and power, and his exhibition of the royal authority to withdraw the hostages; all tend to show that the embassy was communicated to the Norman prince, and Harold's detention most probably premeditated.

The gay and courtly armament, however, was cast away upon a part of the French coast in possession of the earl of Ponthieu. A poor fisherman who had seen Harold in England is said to have recognised him, and, hastening to the earl, to have promised for the sum of ten crowns to put into his hands a prisoner worth more than a thousand. All the survivors of the hurricane, as well as the ships, were seized in the road of Hourdel, and Harold himself was conveyed to the town of Abbeville.[2]

The result would probably have been the same, had Harold arrived in more trim and gorgeous array. It is enough that he was detained against his will. Little suspicious and less artful, he had indubitably been overreached by his more politic rival, who, instead of giving up his hostages, seized the opportunity of adding to them another far more important. Yet could he have

[2] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; apud Mazeres; Ord. Vit.; W. Malms.; Ypodigma; Walsingham; Wace; Chron. Sax.

dared to commit so flagrant a breach of faith as, without the connivance of king Edward, to violate the respect due to the person of his envoy? He did more; he resolved to extort from Harold that promise to support his pretended title to the crown, which was alone wanting to the confirmation of Edward's secret or express bequest. Harold, doubtless indignant that he had either fallen or was betrayed into the snare, and at all events unjustly held captive, naturally conceived that it was excusable in him to adopt any subterfuge, or comply with any conditions to regain his liberty. Under all the circumstances, indeed, to conduct such an embassy in person would have been a serious imputation upon Harold's penetration and judgment, unless we adopt the supposition that he relied upon the sacred character of an envoy,[3] and upon the rank and number of his retinue, for impressing the duke with due respect for his mission.

William was at Rouen when he heard of the accident which had thrown Harold and his suite into the power of his tributary and neighbour. He at once claimed them, and, to cut short all delays, assented to the terms required,—"a gift," we are told, "of the noble manor of Yonne, situated upon that river, and other lands, for the sole use and benefit of the lord of Ponthieu."

Harold was received by the duke at his court at Rouen with the honours due to so brave and distinguished a noble. His were at least golden chains, and he wore them lightly and gracefully, while they ex-

[3] There is another version of this passage of Harold's history, that, to his credit, represents him to have been upon a pleasure party, and accidentally overtaken by a storm, and thrown upon the French coast.—W. Pict.; W. of Malms.

changed all the courtesies of true and gallant knights. He accompanied the duke to a splendid entertainment given by the French king at Compiegne, where they are said to have held joust and tourney; or, in the words of the Norman chronicler, "to have engaged in rare feats of honour." It is even added that the English earl consented to sojourn some time at the ducal court, and attended William in one of his expeditions against Brittany.[4] Here he distinguished himself by his soldierlike qualities, "showing himself a man neither rash in undertaking, nor fearful in performing any services of the field."[5] Admiring his bravery and good conduct, William became still more desirous of gaining him over to his views; both the duchess and himself lavished upon him the greatest tokens of their regard, and, to prove their sincerity, proposed to bestow upon him one of their daughters, then only a child of seven years, in marriage. With less policy, but perhaps equal sincerity, Harold suffered himself to be affianced, thus affording another advantage to his future rival.

Every incident, indeed, connected with this embassy,

[4] This would appear to have been against Conan II., of which more than one chronicle gives us a full account. We are informed also that this earl was poisoned by a baron of his own court, whom he had sent to the duke with a message of defiance. This traitor spread a powerful poison on the inside of the earl's gloves, and on the reins of his horse. The poison being so subtle, was imbibed by the hands and the breath into the earl's body, and brought on a sickness of which he died. Upon this event, the traitor who had been the cause of the earl's death, fearful of his guilt being detected, fled from the Breton army, and went over to the duke of Normandy to inform him of the earl's death. From this circumstance it was absurdly rumoured that William, dreading the rising talents and successes of the young earl, had some hand in thus shortening his days; but of this there is not the slightest evidence.

[5] Hayward; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Wace.

served to place the duke in a more commanding position. Even the attempt of his great vassal Conan II., to throw off his allegiance at the instigation of William's enemies, on the ground of his legitimate descent from a sister of Richard the Good, redounded only to the farther triumph of the Norman, and added to the difficulties and dependence of Harold.[6] Not only was he enlisted in the duke's campaigns, but everywhere appeared with him in public, as if, in the character of an ambassador, to give sanction to the duke's claims to the English crown, while in nothing was this artful policy more triumphant than in courting his alliance, and heaping upon him honours and distinctions, which he could not refuse.[7] Hunting and hawking, balls and festivals, succeeded each other in profusion, to all which Earl Harold was invited—the duchess at her court vieing with the duke himself, in showing how well they could appreciate the amiable and noble qualities of their reluctant guest.

At length, seizing the favourable moment when Harold expressed his pleasure at the prospect of so intimate an alliance as that proposed, the duke took him aside, and told him of king Edward's kind promise; and the proofs he had that it was his intention that he (the duke), should succeed him in the English throne.[8]

[6] William, though he signed himself Bastardus with great coolness, did not fail to remind the legitimate Conan of his duty to do homage to him, in accordance with the suzerain law, so strictly defined and traced up to ancient usage, in the time of Rollo, their common ancestor. Conan refused to comply, entered Normandy, seized on the castle of St. James, made incursions in the territories of Maine and Anjou, penetrating as far as the castle of Goutiers, when his career was suddenly cut short, as we have related.

[7] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.

[8] Norman historians assert, as strongly as all English writers deny,

Harold is stated to have replied that "it was true."[9] "Being fully aware," continued the duke, "of your high reputation and great influence in England, I have for some time past resolved to request your assistance, when the decisive moment shall have arrived." Earl Harold was too good a courtier to express his astonishment at this address; but he remained silent; "and in return," resumed the duke, "my actions will show that you may count upon my gratitude—a gratitude without bounds—upon the splendour and aggrandisement of all your family, and a perfect reconciliation with the present king."[1]

The English earl, too sensible that he was in William's power, and thus artfully informed for the first time of the duke's motives, and probably those of Edward, in sanctioning his voyage into Normandy; dreading also to be retained as a third hostage; at once professed to espouse the duke's interests, with a degree of dissimulation which he conceived to be fully justified by the snare which had been laid for him. He promised, with as good a grace as he could assume, to accede to Edward's wishes and support the duke's claims to the throne.

Having gained this important concession, William, to show how eager he was to cement this new alliance by the closest ties, led Harold into an adjoining hall of

the donation on the part of Edward, either to the duke or to his predecessor; on the contrary, maintaining that he bequeathed the kingdom, with the consent of the people, to earl Harold.—Haddon MS. Papers, B.M.

[9] Hayward; Lives of the Norman Dukes, &c.; Abbé Prevost; Vic du duc Guillaume; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

[1] This last remark seems strongly to corroborate the view we have taken of this dubious portion of William's life.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; W. Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Thierry.

the palace, where, before a splendid assembly, was publicly performed the ceremony of pledge-troth between the affianced parties, the young princess Adeliza and the noble Saxon, which was confirmed with the most binding oaths.[2] The duke, as if suspicious that the consent was feigned, or to make all doubly sure, had next recourse to a proceeding as imposing as it was politic, in the estimation of that heroic and superstitious age. He summoned an assembly of prelates and barons at Bonneville, or, according to another historian, at Bayeux, but with more probability at the abbey of Jumièges, the favourite abode of king Edward, when he resided in Normandy. The grand religious ceremony observed by William, when receiving the oaths and fealty of his magnates, subsequently to his victories over his barons and the French king, was now repeated by him, in the hope of securing the fidelity of Harold while so fortunately in his power.

The same holy vessels and other relics are said to have been brought for the occasion from Nôtre Dame and St. Ouen; "and among these," says the delighted chronicler, "were seen the sacred remains of St. Candre, which were ordered to be laid upon a chair covered with cloth of gold, and upon the cloth a missal opened at a chapter of one of the holy evangelists."

All these imposing preparations being completed in the presence of Harold, and of the prelates and barons, William recited the articles of agreement entered into between them, including the betrothal of his daughter and the compact by which he was to ascend the throne of England after king Edward's decease. Harold then

[2] Chron. de Nor.; Wace; W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Thierry; W. Pict.

placed his hand upon the missal, and swore by the holy Evangelists to observe his promise and do nothing in derogation of William's title to the crown.

The duke then ordered the cloth of gold to be raised, and exhibited to Harold's view the collection of holy relics upon which he had just sworn; at the sight of which, says the chronicle, the earl was seized with a violent trembling.[3]

Whether we are to consider this portion of the Norman Chronicles as in part or wholly apocryphal, inserted to give a stronger title to William's succession, may be dubious; but, if the event actually took place, it is characteristic of the duke's usual caution and foresight in preparing for the approaching contest. Nor is it at variance with his studied observance of religious ceremonies upon all interesting and important occasions. Satisfied that he could exact no more from the unfortunate Harold, William now bade him a courteous farewell, lavishing upon him the last marks of his high consideration and regard. He accompanied his guest as far as Harfleur, where the latter, expressing his sense of the duke's courtesy and hospitality, took ship and arrived safely in England.

The subsequent conduct of earl Harold offers a happy commentary upon the character of those forced compacts which all history demonstrates to be made only to be broken. Harold's first object was to free himself from his trammels by forming new compacts with the duke's enemies, by extending his influence at home, and raising a powerful army, which he disciplined in border

[3] It is not a little illustrative of the superstition of the times that Harold should feel so much more alarm at the idea of having sworn upon the holy relics than upon the Scriptures themselves.

wars against the Welsh and Northumbrian Danes. The latter had thrown off the yoke of his brother Tostig, the insurgents being led by Morcar and Edwin, two noble brothers, who advanced to give Harold battle. Terms, however, were proposed, soon after which the earl, forgetting his pledge to duke William's daughter, consented to espouse a sister of the two powerful lords, and the richest heiress in England. Tostig, enraged at this new alliance, hastened to the court of his father-in-law in Flanders, where he did all in his power to injure the cause of his gallant brother, whom he had till that time so zealously supported.[4]

This quarrel and the false step previously taken may be said to have cost Harold his future crown and his life.[5] It brought down upon him the invasion of the Danes, at a juncture when his squadrons might have swept the seas and annihilated the Norman fleet; when with his combined armies he might have opposed the duke's landing with every advantage, instead of wasting his best resources in repelling his brother Tostig and his Danish allies.

Had he not committed these grievous errors, followed by civil dissensions, so favourable to William's fortunes, he might still have retained possession of the government, and formed the head of a new dynasty of Anglo-Saxon kings.

Upon his return in triumph to the capital, Harold found king Edward upon the point of death. It is recorded by more than one contemporary that, at this crisis, he sought to extort from the dying monarch[6] a

[4] Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; Chron. Sax.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.

[5] Hume; Henry; Lyttleton; Temple.

[6] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham; Wace.

written attestation of his appointment to the succession, but that the only answer he could obtain was that he had already resigned his crown in favour of the duke of Normandy;[7] and, were he to comply with Harold's wishes, it was extremely doubtful if he would ultimately succeed.[8] Harold persisted, and a curious scene is stated to have taken place round the death-bed of the pious monarch.

In the absence of the duke, Edward's presumed heir, passing by Edgar on the score of his youth and feeble character, the court and its satellites naturally turned their eyes towards the rising sun. So loud was the demonstration of their new-born loyalty towards Harold, that, disturbed by the uproar, the royal Confessor turned his face towards the wall, and is reported to have exclaimed: "Let the English make choice of whom they please, the duke or the earl, *je l'octroie*—I sanction it."

King Edward expired, January 5th, 1066, and was interred at Westminster Abbey, of which he is declared to have been the earliest founder. Earl Harold was crowned at St. Paul's, by Aldred, archbishop of York; but the Saxon chroniclers[9] agree that, when he was about to place the crown on the earl's head, the latter took the emblem of royalty from him, and put it on with his own hands, as if giving the spectators to understand that he had acquired it; the prelates, nobles, and people

[7] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham; Wace.

[8] All our great constitutional authorities are agreed that no king of England, circumstanced as Edward was, could, under the common law or usage of England, make a donation of the crown. It has been decided by the resolution of a full parliament, the most infallible interpreter of our laws.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

[9] Mat. of West.; Chron. Sax.; P. Pict.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

tacitly submitting to the usurpation, though in the presence of Edgar Atheling,[1] the rightful heir.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the self-crowned monarch took upon him to bestow the dignity of knighthood upon the young Edgar, whom he raised to the earldom of Oxford, and retained near his person.[2] Many other nobles and prelates were promoted, and king Harold sought to render himself popular by every means in his power. Nor was he destitute of qualities calculated to adorn a throne. Still there were sufficient indications that his reign would be brief and perilous. His brother Tostig was busily intriguing against him at different foreign courts. Enemies seemed to spring up on every side; the Danes were preparing a fresh invasion; war was imminent. But king Harold welcomed the sound; for, if not an experienced statesman, he was a truly heroic soldier.

During this eventful and exciting interval, the duke had not been an idle spectator of the scene. The strenuous labours in which he was engaged to develop the national resources proved that he had not implicitly relied upon Harold, or expected to seize a prize like the English crown without a struggle.[3] Taking advantage of his intimate alliance with the court of Flanders, and

[1] So termed from the word *athel*, noble, a title borne by the sons of Saxon monarchs.—Spelman, Gloss.

[2] Prince Edgar and duke William were Harold's formidable competitors; one by his title, the other by his great power and military achievements. But the first finding himself too weak, and the other too remote to oppose him, he stepped into the throne, and was crowned the day after Edward's decease.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

[3] That Harold was elected king almost by the unanimous consent of the nobility as well as the people, seems to be proved by the fact of not a single man having gone over to the side of William after his landing.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

prompted by the zeal and spirit of his consort, he had formed new plans for the promotion of trade and commerce, and for the extension of his naval as well as his military power. His people were comparatively happy and prosperous under a government as strong as it was able and enlightened. It was extraordinary how soon Normandy recovered from the effects of previous ravages, and of foreign and domestic struggles, and had gradually assumed a position that obtained for her the respect of surrounding states of greater pretensions.

William appears, indeed, to have been long intent upon making preparations for the grand event of his invasion of England. He devoted much time to the improvement and increase of his shipping, planned spacious harbours, and finally succeeded in raising Normandy to the first rank as a maritime power. Accompanied by his duchess, who took a lively interest in all his undertakings, he visited the chief towns and ports of his duchy, and continued some time at Cherbourg, where he superintended the construction of its noble pier, probably the first of the kind that had been built. He was equally active in promoting the interests of other sea-ports; and personally inspected the improvement of the ducal lands, and the great fiefs held under him as lord paramount. In the administration of his own estates, he set a beneficial example to many of his haughty and rapacious barons.

William's government of Normandy, in fact, was mild, compared with that of some of the northern monarchs, the invaders of southern and western Europe. Their conquests were not a mere change of government, or the substitution of one race of monarchs for another; but a total subversion of the property,

customs, and institutions of the vanquished people.[4] The daughters of the greatest families among the conquered were compelled to receive husbands from the leaders of their enemies, while those of the inferior class were exposed to the grossest insults, or driven in despair to the protection of convents. The youth of the other sex, born to splendid possessions, were sold as slaves, or compelled to labour as serfs,[5] on the lands which their fathers held as proprietors.

In England William attempted to rule, like one of these northern conquerors, or as his ancestor Rollo had first governed Brittany and Normandy. So far was this system of disinheriting carried after the Conquest, that, by a general enactment inserted in Doomsday-book, all alienations by Saxons, subsequently to the Conquest by William, and all titles to estates, not derived from him, and registered in his books, were declared null.[6] The misery and degradation of the vanquished riveted chains about their necks, which were hardly relaxed by the lapse of a thousand years.[7] But this appalling picture, which displays the character of William's government in England, in direct violation of the laws he had affected to sanction, was rendered still more terrible by the burdens and abuses of a system, the cruelty and oppression of which were left to subordinate authorities to carry out.[8]

Duke William was hunting in the forest of Rouvray, near Rouen, at the moment when he heard of Harold's accession to the English throne. He was in the act,

[4] Alison, Intro. to Hist. of Europe.

[5] Alison ; Thierry ; Sismondi ; Mackintosh ; Smythe. [6] Ibid.

[7] Sismondi ; Thierry ; Hallam ; Smythe.

[8] Alison ; Thierry ; Lingard ; Hallam ; Brodie ; Henry ; Smythe.

says his domestic chronicler,[9] of discharging his bow, when a messenger arrived (January, 1066) with tidings of the death of Edward, and the coronation of King Harold. This messenger was Tostig, the new monarch's brother, who, on ascertaining the fact from his spies at Calais and Boulogne, rode post with the express object of rousing the duke to the invasion of England without delay.

For some time William appeared much affected and lost in thought. The king's sudden death, and the successful treachery, as he considered it, of Harold, pre-occupied his mind too painfully, to enter into any schemes with the traitor brother at such a moment. It was not long, however, before he showed that he knew how to avail himself of the vindictive and irreconcileable hatred of this bad man, against the more generous and noble-minded Harold.[1]

The duke, it is added, unstringing the bow which no one else could bend, pensively resumed his way through

[9] W. Pict.; Gesta Gul. Ducis.

[1] It is the opinion of some writers that Harold was elected king, if not agreeably to the will of Edward, with the consent of the prelates, nobles, and people. The Saxons, in general, used to ratify the will of the last monarch in appointing a successor; but neither Harold nor the duke being specifically named, it could not invalidate the right of the people to choose a monarch for themselves, especially at a time when they were in danger of foreign invasion.—Higden Chron. Sax; Hur. Urgon; Sim. Dunelm; Eadmer Hist. Nouv.; Diceto; Abb. Chron.; Hoveden, sub ann. 1065, 1066; Lyttleton, Life of Henry II. When once masters of England, no wonder the Normans should impeach Harold's title, and speak of him as a usurper. It must have been dangerous for contemporary writers to treat so delicate a subject with impartiality and truth. William had nothing to allege in support of his claims but a promise, unauthenticated by any will, which also, without the ratification of the great council, would not have been binding upon the people of England. —Lyttleton; Ingulphus. 65, 8; W. of Malms. l. ii. f. 52.

the forest towards the banks of the Seine, and, crossing the river, he retired to his palace at Rouen, erected upon the site of the present ancient tower. In great agitation he traversed the hall with rapid strides, suddenly stopping and changing his position and attitude, while not one of his attendants ventured to approach him. At length one of his aged seneschals, in whom he greatly confided, entering the room where the duke's officers were assembled, they thronged around him, and anxiously inquired if he knew the cause of their master's extreme emotion. "I know nothing about it," was his cavalier reply; "but I soon shall," he muttered to himself, as he drew nigh and accosted William. "What is the use, my liege, of trying to conceal what everybody knows? You are troubled that the King of England is dead; and that Harold, violating his sacred engagements, has seized the kingdom!" "Of a truth," replied the duke, "the death of king Edward and the injuries of earl Harold touch me nearly."

As they were speaking, William Fitzosborne[2] made his appearance; he possessed considerable influence over the duke's mind, and now employed it successfully to restore his usual equanimity and good humour. The advice he gave is too happy and philosophical to be passed over in silence. "No one," he began, "ought to grieve and be angry at what he can remedy; and still less at that for which there is no remedy. Now there is no remedy for Edward's death; but there is with respect to Harold's life; for you have power to

[2] Then count and commander of Breteuil, so famous for his own exploits and those of his family, which he and his father raised to a degree of splendour inferior only to that which attached to the crown.

wipe out your injuries, and utterly to destroy him, you having justice upon your side. Have you not a noble host of followers, all prepared to obey your behests? What is there wanting but a bold heart? and a great undertaking once well begun may fairly be said to be half finished."

This cheering doctrine was extremely well-timed, for, though bent upon the assertion of his claims, the duke knew how to estimate enemies like Harold and the Anglo-Saxons. His power of dissimulation, as we have observed, was remarkable, even at an early age; and it is evident that, in this studied passion, he was testing the disposition and sounding the real sentiments of those around him. His "emphasis of grief" was assumed to rouse the attention and enlist the sympathies of the Normans, to influence public opinion, and to prove how deeply he felt his presumed wrongs.

When his well-feigned anger had exhausted itself, he called a council of his lords and prelates at Rouen, and with their concurrence despatched an embassy to England to remind Harold of the sacred promise he had made to support his ducal claims, and calling upon him to resign the crown.

During this mission, William exhibited the same anxiety and impatience, though he must have anticipated the nature of the reply of Harold; and he was doubtless actuated by the same motives of keeping the public attention alive to his claims. He laid before his great council the reply of Harold, purporting that the King of England held himself in no manner responsible to the Duke of Normandy, but that he would willingly acknowledge him for his friend and ally, provided he made no

demands upon the crown; in which event he declared himself his mortal enemy.[3]

In addition to this council, William now summoned a more special or privy council, consisting of his magnates, or chief vassals and prelates, all leading men devoted to his interests, including Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Robert Earl of Mortaine, the Count d'Eu, Roger de Montgomery, Fitzosborne of Breteuil, the counts Longueville and Guiffard, Roger de Beaumont and his sons, with other intrepid and experienced leaders. The duke entered into a full narrative of all that had passed between himself and Harold, at the close of which he affected to submit the question to their decision and to abide by a majority of voices. "Sire!" was the unanimous reply, "the affair cannot remain in its present state. With God's help prosecute the enterprise, and not one of us but will support you to the utmost with our swords and fortunes." This last assurance must have been not a little consolatory to the duke, whose treasury, by dint of repeated wars and insurrections, and the public works which he had carried on, was not at that moment in the most flourishing condition. Nor was the matter at issue a mere question of succession, but of a great and daring undertaking, calling for immense resources, such as Normandy in itself could not supply, and only to be accomplished by putting it into the tempting form of a grand territorial speculation, as well as of chivalrous adventure.

It was, as the duke declared, solely by a combination of energies and means greater than any he had yet developed that they could hope for success. For the direction of these would be required consummate pru-

[3] Mat. of West.; Eadmer; P. Pict.; Hume; Henry; Thierry; Sismondi.

dence, activity, and statesmanlike genius, as well as experienced soldiership; and of this truth no one was more fully aware than the duke himself. But his courage rose with the emergency; he saw that he must possess the sinews of war, for that by war alone he could become a king. Its requisitions could not be defrayed even by a general contribution of his own people. He would require foreign support; and, having obtained the consent of his council of chief prelates and barons, he convoked the general states as a preliminary step to this desirable object. These, too, met at Lillebonne, and the meeting was of a most stormy and dissentient character.

It seemed as if the proposition for pecuniary aid, made to the notables of the towns, to be afforded in the shape of a new tax, had conjured up the spirit of discord, which put forth its most convincing arguments to repudiate the idea of paying for the conquest of England.[4] Royal taxes, argued some of the citizens, were a vile and heathenish invention; but duke's taxes, levied for the conquest of new regions, were still more intolerable, and not to be entertained for a moment.[5]

The duke took all in good humour, and by his energy and eloquence succeeded in appeasing the tumult. It was then proposed to pay in kind instead of money; that is, to supply him with the various munitions of war at a certain estimate, in addition to vessels of war, troops, and transports. The more refractory citizens suggested that they should find quite enough to do to defend their own shores; while others declared they had neither money nor means to pay in any shape; and a third party had an insurmountable objection to

[4] W. Pict.; Eadmer; Wace; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax. Chron. de Nor.

[5] Ibid

all foreign broils. The gallant Fitzosborne, blushing for the parsimony or pusillanimity of his fellow-subjects, and eager to set a better example, hit upon an expedient for reducing them to reason, declaring that he would himself supply forty ships, and suggesting that every one should subscribe something, have his name recorded, and state the extent of his resources in a private interview with the duke. This proposal had the desired success; the mercantile body could not with any grace decline it, and William, finding that he made little progress by the usual measures, embraced the baron's opportune expedient, and tried what he could effect by separating the refractory body into its constituent parts. He is said to have honoured each of the notables with an interview; when, exposed to the terrors of his voice and frown, and unsupported by the collected body which infuses so much courage into the individual members, they were no longer able to refuse compliance with his demands. The wealthiest were called upon first to head the list; the example of Fitzosborne, with his forty ships, was followed by other loyal nobles; and all ranks ultimately became eager to have their names commemorated in this great enterprise.

The earl's politic device was thus perfectly successful: a loan of the easiest kind, guaranteed by foreign conquest, was in fact negotiated. The fire of emulation spread from this meeting, which looked at first so ominous, throughout all Normandy; and the alarm of war rung through the adjacent counties, states, and even kingdoms, till Italy, Spain, and Germany, heard the exciting notes, and adventurers began to pour in from every side.

The fate of England trembled in the balance. How

best to promote the grand invasion became the favourite topic of all ranks.[6] Even Norman ladies, like those of Sparta, invited sons and consorts to join the banners of their conquering sovereign; and every country around appeared eager to swell the already enormous list, the papal power itself attaching its name for the proscription of Harold and of Saxon England.

By a few only of William's enemies was this great project ridiculed as a wild and impracticable undertaking. Among these was the young king Philip of France, his nominal suzerain, and his envious vassals of Brittany and Anjou. But William now summoned the latter, as their liege lord, to attend him in their military capacity, at the same time holding out promises of extensive grants, as an inducement to join his banners. He next proceeded to St. Germain, to hold an interview with the haughty and envious Philip. Without reflecting on his own youth and inexperience, he presumed to lecture the duke upon what he termed the folly of such an expedition; and when William explained his plans and resources, instead of entering into his views, he told him that he had better remain at home, for he would find it quite as much as he could do to take care of his own dominions. "I am well aware," was William's reply, "that you stand in the position of my suzerain; and if you consent to support me, I will acknowledge you lord paramount of England also. But if not, I will not. But God will support the right, and you will lose the most powerful vassal that a lord sovereign ever boasted."[7]

The young king then assembled a council, at which

[6] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Wace; Ord. Vit.

[7] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

it was resolved to grant no aid to the Normans, inasmuch as, owing to their great power,[8] they at all times yielded reluctant fealty to their lieges; and, should the duke now succeed, they would become more refractory than ever. Once King of England, the event would be that William would lead the English against France, and invade the kingdom of his lord as often as it pleased him so to do. Nor were Philip's counsellors wrong in their prediction, which was soon fulfilled to the letter.

At the termination of this council, which had so completely unveiled the duke's future policy, he was conducted by the king, "in a very irritated state of mind," to his retinue; and upon taking his leave he observed, with marked emphasis: "If I should succeed in my attempt, I shall consider myself bound only to those who have assisted me."[9]

William's next application was to his father-in-law, the Earl of Flanders. This veteran statesman, who had contrived to remain at peace and preserve his alliance with opposite parties, looked upon the matter purely in a mercantile light, and with a view to the influence it might have on the value of his manufactures, corn, and cattle. After mature deliberation, he is stated at first to have declined holding any stake in the new adventure. Upon being further urged, he declared that he would only interfere on the condition of receiving a *carte blanche* to fill up at his pleasure, as some compensation for the risks he might incur. To this modest proposal, William, with the same reservation used by his intended son-in-law, king Harold, pretended to submit, and his considerate sire had the conscience to fill it up

[8] W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Wace; W. Pict.

[9] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Chron. de Nor.

with the sum of 3000 marks, to be paid yearly to the Flemish court, in consideration of certain vessels and troops to be supplied.[1] Other accounts, however, state that the duke refused to sanction these exorbitant demands, informing the earl that he would send a written answer to his request. Then, having taken a piece of parchment, and carefully folded it without any contents, he directed it with this superscription: "Your income from England shall amount exactly to what you find written herein." Upon whatever terms, however, the contract was subsequently made, it is certain that the duke obtained a handsome supply both of men and ships from Flanders.

William's embassy to the pope, conducted by his favourite Lanfranc,[2] was attended with even greater success. This he gained by having respectfully submitted his cause, in the first instance, to the judgment of Rome, which Harold omitted to do, and was thereupon declared a usurper by Alexander II., proceeding upon a political maxim, uniformly observed by the papal see, to pronounce sentence in favour of those who apply to it against those who do *not*, without any regard to the merits of the case.

Having thus "hallowed his enterprise in the eyes of the world," William resolved to pursue it, in the face of difficulties such as none but a great and heroic spirit would have dared to encounter. It was not with a cowardly dispirited people he was to contend. The long

[1] Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor. "It was an expedition composed of various nations."—Hallam, Hist. and Govern. of Europe, ii. 164.

[2] Sir James Mackintosh, in his ably-written History of England, designates this prelate as "a man otherwise *worthy of honours*, but a creature of William, and a slave to Rome."—Hist. of Engl. i. 107.

and peaceful reign of Edward might possibly have rendered the Saxon militia somewhat less formidable, but still the general temper of the nation was warlike, nor was the tranquillity of those times so profound as not to afford them some occasions of exercising their valour, in which they nobly maintained their ancient reputation.[3] An English army raised by Edward had vanquished Macbeth, and restored Malcolm Canmore to the kingdom of Scotland.[4] Another had very lately, and under the command of Harold himself, subdued the Welsh.

Harold's navy was much superior to that of the Normans, both in the goodness of his ships and the qualities of his sailors, as the Norman writers themselves acknowledge. He was farther strengthened by a close alliance with Denmark, being of the royal blood of that nation by Githa his mother, who was sister to Swain or Sueno, the then reigning king. This proximity naturally endeared him to all his subjects of Danish extraction, who were still very numerous in some parts of England, and was much more than a counterpoise to the ancient relation between the Danes and the Normans.[5] We even find that a considerable body of troops was sent to him by his uncle, on the first alarm of an invasion designed against him from Normandy. On the side of Wales or of Scotland he had nothing to fear, the princes who governed the Welsh being attached to his interests; and

[3] Lord Lyttleton, Life of Henry II.; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

[4] Lord Lyttleton; Dunelm; Hoveden, 1054; W. of Malms.; Ingulphus; Flor. Urgom.; W. Pict.; Ord. Vit.

[5] Dunelm. sub. ann. 1064; W. Pict. Gest. Gul. 198; Ord. Vit. l. 3, 493; Flor. Urgom. 635; sub. ann. 1067; Ord. Vit. 502; liii.; S. Dunelm. de Gest. R. A. 97; sub. ann. 1067; Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Lord Lyttleton, passim; Henry; Hume; Lingard; Thierry; Sismondi.

the Scotch, under Malcolm, who owed his crown to the English, having contracted a league of friendship with that nation, on which Harold might rely with security. Among his own people there was no discontent to invite or assist an invader. His government was so gracious[6] that, usurper as he was, his subjects would have learned to love him. And, if we may judge from what occurred in the reign of Edward, the Normans were of all foreigners most odious to the English, whose animosity against them had appeared in national acts, and had overpowered the inclination expressed by Edward in their favour.[7]

When all these circumstances are considered, it may well be affirmed that there is no enterprise recorded in history more surprisingly bold than this of the Duke of Normandy. But what in an ordinary person would be culpable rashness, becomes in a great man only a proper application of extraordinary talents. So strong was the influence which the superior genius of this prince possessed over the Normans, that, as if he had animated them with his own spirit, they voluntarily agreed to give him the aid he desired in this dangerous war, which they were not bound to support in virtue of their tenures, following him with no less alacrity than if it had been their own quarrel. But, sensible of the danger of leaving his dominions so destitute of military protection, he provided against it by a league with the emperor Henry the Fourth, a mighty and warlike prince, who engaged to defend him as an ally of the empire against any invader.[8]

[6] Lord Lyttleton, Life of Henry II., passim.

[7] Lord Lyttleton, Life of Henry II., passim ; Ord. Vitales ; Gest. Gul. Duc. sub. an. 1066 ; W. of Malms. l. iii. f. 56, sec. 30.

[8] Nouv. Hist. de Nor. ; Chron. de Nor. ; Chron. Sax.

To crown the duke's successful labours, pope Alexander gratified, with the repeated embassies, and still more ample promises, which flattered him with the supremacy of the Holy See in the ecclesiastical government of England, presented him with a consecrated banner and a gold ring, in which was inclosed a precious gem, with a lock of St. Peter's hair.[9]

So widely spread the fame of the duke's active preparations for the invasion of England, that astrology itself seemed eager to take a share in the adventure, drawing as largely as possible upon public credulity by the prediction of its results. Its mysterious prognostics were corroborated by the appearance of a comet with two fiery tails,[1] extending towards the south; by that unusual phenomenon indicating, it might be supposed, the approaching union between England and Normandy. Within a few months William was enabled to assemble a fleet of more than three thousand vessels, of all sizes, and an army exceeding 60,000 men, select and well-appointed troops, commanded by some of the first leaders of the age. Vassals and volunteers alike flocked to his standard; adventurers from the south vied with the heads of the first families in Normandy and the adjacent states.[2] These contributed to form a separate body, and to swell his veteran ranks.

[9] W. of Malms.; Speed; Baker; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor. To such a height was the enthusiasm carried, that Norman striplings were brought by their mothers and sweethearts to William's camp, entreating that he would enlist them and permit them to enjoy some brother's share (a military term of partnership) in the undertaking; and others were sent by princes from Italy, Spain, and Germany, with a like view.

[1] Many verses were composed to commemorate the *entrée* of this glittering stranger, who appears to have troubled the people more than it "perplexed monarchs" upon this eventful occasion.

[2] Wace; Bayeux Tapestry; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Thierry; Sismondi.

The first appearance of the armament was at the mouth of the river Dive. There also the duke received a great accession of strength. Alan Fergant[3] arrived at the head of 5000 men, and the Bretons were speedily followed by other tributaries, allured by the amount of grants, pensions, places, or lands, dowers for their daughters, and rich English heiresses for the more adventurous bachelors. The rewards were apportioned to their deserts; to some was assigned a castle, to some a town or domain, while others bargained for the hands of those fair Saxon dames of whose substantial possessions they had previously informed themselves. This latter arrangement appears to have excited no small jealousy in the breasts of the Norman ladies, and more especially in those of higher rank, who were left to take care of their houses. They were the only parties excluded from the privilege of accompanying the Conqueror, whose followers comprised even monks and schoolmasters. More offices and appointments are stated to have been given away in prospective than could have been supplied by the forfeiture of all the lands in England; but William was profuse of his grants and gifts, in proportion to his expectations that the number of claimants would be greatly reduced by battle or other casualties, before the day when he should be called upon to redeem his engagements.

Previously to joining his armament, William summoned a council, at which he formally conferred upon his consort Matilda the authority of duchess-regent,

[3] The son of duke Hoel, who had succeeded Conan II., and despatched these veteran troops to William's assistance. Some of the Norman chronicles contain very precise details, in quaint and often amusing language, as to the particulars of this renowned expedition.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Wace.

with the assistance of a council, of which Roger de Beaumont was the president.[4] The duchess and her court were present; and at the conclusion of the ceremonies, turning towards his consort, the duke added: "And let us not, lady, lack the benefit of your prayers, nor those of your fair attendants, for the good success of this our expedition." He is said also to have associated his eldest son Robert, then a youth of fourteen, with the duchess in the regency, assisted by the prelates and barons in council, to whom he had committed so responsible a trust.

After being detained a month in the Dive by contrary winds, the whole fleet succeeded in reaching the harbour of St. Valery.[5] Still it could not make sail, and so many obstacles occurred in addition to the adverse elements, that the bravest began to doubt, and the duke was compelled to have recourse to his old expedient of

[4] W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Wace; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

[5] During William's stay at St. Valery, some English spies, whom king Harold had sent to discover the power of the duke, were taken. When they were brought before him, he addressed them in these words: "Your lord might well have spared this charge. He needed not to have cast away his money to learn what he will soon feel more speedily than he expects. Tell him from me, if he meet me not in the place where he thinks he may most safely set his foot before the end of this year, he need never fear danger from me while he lives." Some of his nobles, expressing their apprehensions of Harold's power: "I am glad to hear this opinion of his great prowess; the greater shall our glory be in prevailing against him. But I see right well that I have small cause to fear his discovery of our strength, when you, who are so near me, can discern so little. Rest yourselves upon the justice of your cause, and the foresight of your commander. Who hath less than he who can justly term nothing his own? I know more of his weakness than ever he shall know of my strength till he feel it. Perform you your parts like men, and he shall never be able to disappoint either my assurance or your hopes."—Hayward, Lives of Nor. Kings.

re-assuring the minds of the weak and wavering, by a fresh appeal to their ignorance and superstition. With this powerful engine, so successfully employed by all great leaders, not excepting Cromwell and Napoleon, he succeeded in reviving their slackened zeal. He reasonably inferred that the wind, having blown so long from one quarter, was not unlikely to change, and he proclaimed another religious ceremony, at which the entire armament was to attend, to invoke the aid of all their tutelary saints.

It is singular how well he timed these public acts of devotion, and how speedily they were followed, as in this instance, by the desired success.[6] Some of his vessels had already been beaten back, others lost; and in this dilemma he was fortunate enough, as it is reported, to be accosted by a certain holy man, who inquired why he looked so downcast, and what it was he wanted. "I want a fair wind," was the duke's laconic reply. "Then why," rejoined the stranger, "address you not your prayers to Monseigneur Saint Valery; and he will send you a fair wind, and all else you need." At this comfortable assurance the duke instantly ordered a public procession to take place in honour of the saint, accompanied by all his relics, and his body itself, which was conveyed from the adjacent abbey. These were exhibited to the view of the whole army, extended upon a

[6] In fact, William was compelled to adopt some expedient or other, as there was no time to be lost. Both the soldiers and sailors began to murmur, and the complaints were daily becoming louder. Many compared him to his ancestor, Robert the Devil, whose fate it was, they said, like all of his family, to be continually aiming at higher things than he could achieve, and still finding God his adversary.—W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Wace; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

cloth of gold, and a universal prayer was then offered up. The saint's body was laid upon a shrine encased in silver, with all the rich oblations offered by princes and prelates to propitiate him in their cause.[7]

Considering how long the wind had blown from the same quarter, we may believe, without much astonishment, that it changed on the ensuing evening. It was the eve of Saint Michael, the tutelary saint of Normandy, and all parties, we are assured, embarked with the utmost ardour, after so decided a manifestation in their favour. We have a full and particular account, by the contemporary and other chroniclers,[8] of the different trades and professions, with artists and artisans of every class, not excepting numbers of monks and lay clergy, who accompanied the grand expedition.

William was assembling his vassals previously to hoisting sail, when he was agreeably surprised by the arrival of his fair consort in a noble and well-built vessel, constructed at her own expense, and of which she made him an unexpected and welcome present. Besides its grand proportions, it was decorated in a style of princely splendour, equalled only by its power of sailing. Upon its prow it bore the effigy of their second son, William, his face directed towards England, with a trumpet at his mouth, and bearing a bow with the arrow drawn to the head.[9] Upon its approach, acclamations which rent the air burst forth from the combined fleet; and scarcely had the duchess greeted her loving lord, when, as if auspicious of victory, a breeze sprung

[7] Nouv. Hist.; M. of West.; Chron. de Nor.

[8] Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Wace.

[9] Ibid.

up, and the duke, leading the way in his gallant vessel, ordered his blood-red flag to be hoisted throughout the whole armament.

So great was the speed of the Mira that she quite outstripped the rest of the fleet. At dawn not a vessel was to be seen; and William, ordering the crew to slacken sail, bade the master ascend the top-mast and report the distance of the squadron left behind.

"What is it you see?" inquired the duke.

"Nothing yet, but sea and sky."

"Look out sharply! What see you now?"

"I can see a few small specks afar off." And in a little time he added, "I can now see a forest of tall masts under a heavy press of sail."[1]

Rejoined by his fleet, William proceeded without farther obstacle, and arrived next day in the bay of Pevensey, on the Sussex coast, September 28th, 1066. So great was his impatience to effect a landing unopposed, that, advancing first among the archers, he leaped upon the shore. His foot slipping as he touched the land, he fell;[2] but with the same presence of mind

[1] W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Thierry; Wace; Hist. de Nor.

[2] One of his poetic chroniclers has celebrated this historic trait in the following verses:—

"Quand li dus, princes fors issi
Sour sus peaumes avant chai,
Sempre y ont leal grand cri
Et disoient tuit. Mal signe a chill,
Et il lour en a haut crii,
Seigneurs par la resplendeur de
La terre ag o deux mains saiseet,
Sans chalenge, ni ert m'es guerpu,
Tout es votre qu'auque y a."

Wace; Ord. Vit.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

displayed by the great Julius,[3] he grasped the earth with both his hands, crying with a loud voice, "By the splendour of the earth, I have seized England with both my hands!" and he sprung up with a joyous countenance, thus addressing himself to the earls and knights who followed him: "You know, my lords, that without challenge no good prize can be made, and that which I have seized, I will with your help maintain; for in that case God has surely appointed me to conquer. He who shall impugn it, or say nay, let him do battle with me."[4] A Norman knight, seizing the duke's idea to turn the accident into a happy omen, and reinspire the troops, who exclaimed that it was an evil sign, ran to a cottage near at hand, and, taking some of the thatch, exclaimed, "See, Sire; I give you seizin of this land, with promise that ere a month you shall be lord over it." "I accept it," was the duke's reply, "and may God aid the right!"

Farther to refresh the spirits of his army, and to remove any sinister impressions, the duke ordered ample rations to be served out after a landing was effected; and, having pitched his tent upon the beach, he sat down with his lords and knights to eat his dinner, and drink success to their arrival in England.[5] One of the duke's first measures, however, was to despatch some flying squadrons to ascertain the state of the sur-

[3] It is recorded of Julius Cæsar that, on alighting from shipboard in Africa, his foot slipped, and he fell in the same manner. He also averted the omen, and turned it to good account, by exclaiming, "Africa, I hold thee fast."—Vestig. Ang.

[4] The archers and knights landed first of all. Next came the soldiers; then carpenters, armourers, and masons, their tools in their hands—saws, planes, axes, &c., slung over their shoulders, besides a number of pioneers and handicraftsmen.—Wace; Ord. Vit.

[5] It was some time before Harold heard of the duke's arrival.

rounding country before he encamped. Perceiving no signs of the enemy, he ordered fires to be lighted, and preparations to be commenced for encamping for the night. During the dinner he is said to have made inquiries regarding two ships which were missing. These were lost in a violent gale, and on board of one of them was the astrologer, who had predicted a safe passage and no opposition upon the part of Harold. On hearing his fate, the duke sarcastically remarked, "He is indeed an ass who pretends to tell others what will happen to them,[6] when ignorant how near at hand his own fate may be." William had, for some time, been in anxious expectation of tidings respecting the grand expedition from Denmark, simultaneous with his own, and four days after his arrival he heard of Harold's victory at Stamford Bridge. Such a victory, however, was almost as fatal as a defeat, and places the policy of his great adversary in a still stronger point of view; for the invasion of Tostig and the Dane, just preceding his own, was more than enough to decide the fate of Harold.[7]

The wily Norman employed his allies, as the Turkish janissaries use their prisoners in the onset of the battle, to impair the vigour, and thin the numbers of their enemies; and thus it was with Harold's army, which had to encounter the fresh veteran hosts of Normandy, and of half Europe. William invariably avoided a battle when it was in the power of the enemy to offer it; he wished to fight only when he could avail himself of some error, and thus reduce the chances of battle

[6] Wace; Thierry; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Prévost; Henderson.

[7] W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Sim. Dunelm; H. Hunt; Wace; Henderson.

to something nearer certainty. Upon being informed of the approach of Harold, at the head of his victorious army, he is said to have observed, "You see that our astrologer is again wrong, for we must have a battle after all. Should I obtain the victory, upon that spot I vow to build and dedicate a church to the blessed Trinity. There shall be offered up perpetual prayers for the soul of good king Edward, for my own soul, for that of my consort Matilda, and for the souls of all who have followed us, and may die in this expedition."[8]

With this additional example of the policy which regulated the whole tenor of his conduct, the duke, having cheered his followers, proceeded to cut off their last chance of escape, leaving them no safety except in victory. He ran his vessels into deep water, and there scuttled them, so as to render them quite useless for the immediate purpose of a home voyage. By some historians, it is asserted that he actually set fire to his whole fleet; but so useless a sacrifice was not at all to be expected from a prince who prized possession of the means of war so highly as William. He next selected an advantageous position for the site of a wooden fortress, to retreat upon in case of need, the materials of which he had brought in his ships. Having put them together, he fortified and placed in it a strong garrison. On the ensuing day he reviewed his troops, making them go through the different evolutions which he meant to employ, as if it were the rehearsal of some interesting and eventful drama; and amongst these was the feigned retreat, afterwards so successfully practised, and which was one of his favourite stratagems.

[8] Thierry; Sismondi; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Wace; Prévost; Henderson; Hayward; Chron. Sax.; S. Dunelm.

The position he had taken up lay between Pevensey and Hastings,[9] and was admirably adapted for a general action, especially for the evolutions of his Norman horse. For a period of ten days not a single enemy appeared. The exigency of Harold's affairs had not permitted him to maintain another army such as that he had led into the north; and one unsuccessful battle upon the coast would go far to decide the fate of the country. Without such an advantage, it was not the policy of William to advance farther into the country; he waited calmly for Harold's approach; and in nothing was the judgment of this admirable commander more conspicuous than in leaving nothing undone which human prudence can provide: hence the confidence with which at the last hour he uniformly gave battle. The moment the pressure of circumstances left him no other means of attaining his object, and not till then, did he risk his fortune upon a single cast.

It was such foresight which engaged the support of Tostig and the descent of Halfager, before he sailed from St. Valery and fought the battle of Hastings. Nor was this all—he threatened Harold both by land and sea from a number of different points at the same time, so as completely to distract his attention. Thus was a free passage left to the Normans, whom his concentrated forces either military or naval would have been sufficient to overwhelm, to blockade them, or to disperse at sea. Such an invasion, then, against so powerful an

[9] It is recorded by Ordericus Vitalis that William erected the castle of Pevensey upon the spot where his army landed before the battle of Hastings; and that it was intended as a place of retreat to the Normans, in case they had been defeated.—Hist. Ang.; Ducarel Monas.; Vestig. Ang.

enemy, afforded ample scope for the display of generalship on a grand scale.

The rebel Tostig and the Dane, having united their forces, overthrown the earls Morcar and Edwin, and taken York, were directing their march upon the capital, when they were intercepted by Harold, routed, and both slain. Their fleet also fell into the hands of the victorious king, on the 25th of September, 1066.

But instead of waiting a sufficient time to refresh and re-inforce his gallant army, he advanced eagerly towards the invader, who received private intelligence "that in four days the king would make his appearance at the head of 60,000 veteran troops. It was added that William would do well to consult his safety and retire in all haste to Normandy."[1] The duke sent a reply "that he was come into England, not to run away but to fight if need be, and that, had he only 10,000 men left, he would accept battle." To show how much he was in earnest, and to set an example to his army, he omitted no occasion of sharing either peril or fatigue. In making a reconnoissance at the head of a detachment, he observed that Fitzosborne complained of the weight of his armour.[2] William

[1] It was sent by a Norman earl, who had been long resident in England; and the son of an English lady named Gymanare, who held a correspondence with the duke.

[2] In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the heavy-linked mail of the Normans, with the close helmet or skull-cap, fastened under the chin and leaving the face exposed, encased the whole body, and required both great strength and endurance to bear during a protracted battle or long campaign. The warriors of a later period, down to the fourteenth century, were clad in more convenient and more beautiful armour. Yet not a few of the latter were early exhausted, and sometimes worn out, at the age of fifty, by the wear and tear upon the constitution, especially of regular campaigners, like the Henries and Edwards, few of whom survived to old age.

desired his attendants to take it off and place it over his own, and thus doubly laden rode back to his tent through the ranks of his applauding countrymen.

Still desirous, if possible, to ascend the English throne without increasing the national animosity by shedding blood, the duke left no means untried to settle the question before involving the two nations in war. He first despatched a monk,[3] in whom he had confidence, to remind Harold of the oaths he had taken to support him in his succession to the kingdom left to him by his relative king Edward. He implored him not to disgrace christianity by employing fire and sword, and shedding the blood of the innocent for the guilty. Incensed beyond control, Harold was on the point of striking the presumptuous monk, as he was proceeding to explain his master's object, and to inculcate its acceptance upon the king, had he not been restrained by his brother Gurth, Earl of York, who motioned the good father to retire.

Harold then sent an embassy to William in his turn, and the messenger was immediately introduced into the duke's presence. "What is Harold's will?" inquired the duke. "For this am I sent by king Harold to the duke of Normandy. He bids you not to count upon any promise he may have made when a captive,[4] but to withdraw from the kingdom, upon which condition king Harold will agree to repair your ships. If not, he will come and give you battle, should you be rash enough

[3] Hugh Mairgot, of Fécamp. In conformity with the wants, as well as fashion, of the times, the monks were then the ambassadors, being generally the only parties who could read or write.

[4] It was opposed to received usage for any monarch to make donation of the crown; and it seems strange that an exception should have been made in favour of William. Was it not rather made by the Norman historians after him?—See Haddon MSS., B. M.

to bide his coming."[5] "Tell him," was William's reply, "that I shall expect him in the open plain; and he shall know me by the colours I bear." He then presented to the ambassador a noble charger, a rich embroidered robe, and forty gold florins; a proof that he was in no want of money. It is recorded by some historians[6] that Harold proposed to purchase his retreat by large sums, as had been the custom with regard to the Danes; but that his offer was rejected by William with marks of disdain. "Tell earl Harold that I did not bring so many crown pieces into the country to barter them for shillings;" being a sarcastic play upon the two words *écus* and *esterlins*.[7]

It has been generally asserted that Harold was advised by his brother Gurth not to stake his crown upon the issue of a single battle,[8] but to prolong the war. He would thus possess many advantages over his adversary; and, in the event of his determining upon a general engagement, he ought, nevertheless, to avoid exposing his own person in the first encounter. Ample resources, it was argued, were at his command, while William on the other hand had cut off his own retreat. At the head of an army composed of veteran soldiers and experienced leaders, king Harold should avoid risking all upon a single die, but seek to exhaust and harass the enemy, till he was enabled to attack with sure promise of success. This could be effected by calling forth the strength of the country, and carrying on a system of desultory warfare, while, in consequence

[5] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne; W. Pict.; Wace.
[6] Ibid.
[7] W. of Malms.; M. of West.; Wace; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.
[8] W. of Malms.

of the ravages which such an invader would necessarily commit, all parties would fly to Harold's support, and William, by advancing, would compromise the safety of his own army.

Deaf, however, to these remonstrances, and animated by his courage and previous good fortune,[9] Harold having obtained some reinforcements, adopted the fatal resolution of attacking his powerful enemy. He could not place the same reliance on the militia and the free bands as on his own veteran soldiers. For this reason, he was, perhaps, not so anxious to increase his numbers as, had he been aware how admirably they would fulfil their duty to their country, he would otherwise have been. These were principally the men of London, Kent and Sussex, who twice made the enemy turn their backs, and who, but for the manœuvres of their too skilful opponent, would have driven his veteran Normans into the sea.

At the distance of about seven miles[1] from the Norman camp, king Harold took up a position which he fortified with strong entrenchments. It was well chosen, and its natural defences were such as to protect it from attacks of the Norman horse, an arm in which Harold was wholly deficient, as well as in bowmen, relying upon the solid masses of his infantry, armed with sword and battle-axe. His fortifications were so constructed as completely to prevent them from being surrounded or outflanked by the enemy,

[9] Harold was brother-in-law to king Edward, and to the two great earls, Edwin and Morcar ; father-in-law to Bliden, Prince of Wales; and nephew to Swain, King of Denmark.—Haddon MSS., B.M.

[1] Some Norman and English writers state the distance at only five miles.

insomuch that, if they had only held their ground without breaking order in the pursuit, as their leader repeatedly inculcated, the Normans must have forced positions almost impregnable, before they could claim the victory.

In the centre of the three great outlets from the wooden ramparts which he had raised in front of his position, so as to admit of ample sorties while they confined the enemy's attacks, king Harold planted the English standard. Having completed his arrangements, turning towards his brother, he expressed a wish to reconnoitre the Norman encampment. Mounting their swiftest steeds, attended with a strong escort, they advanced so close as to observe the duke's most minute arrangements, even up to his very tent and the surrounding pavilions. "What admirable order! and what numbers!" exclaimed Gurth; and it is added that, struck with the justice of this remark, Harold was disposed to change his own plans,[2] and consulted with his brother upon the expediency of retiring upon London; a supposition, however, scarcely consistent with this brave king's previous character and conduct. "You should have adopted that line of policy before," was his brother's reply; "it is too late now. Retreat would be a flight, and carry consternation through all your ranks."

Upon their return, Harold despatched spies to ascertain as nearly as possible the numbers of the enemy. They were arrested and brought before the duke. Instead of condemning them to punishment, William ordered them to be conducted through his camp, to be supplied with refreshments, and to report what they had seen to their master, whose apprehensions were by no means

[2] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne.

allayed by all that he heard. It was observed that there were more priests in the duke's camp than soldiers in king Harold's army; a piece of intelligence which must have been more surprising than gratifying to the clergy of the Anglo-Saxon church. But, fortunately for them, it appears that these supposed ecclesiastics were the duke's archers and cross-bowmen, who, having their heads close shaven in the Norman style, had been mistaken by Harold's spies for members of the priesthood.

Whether sincere or only desirous to save appearances, the duke for some time persisted in his efforts to effect some kind of compromise with Harold. He sent another deputation, bearing three distinct propositions;[3] first, that Harold should surrender the crown, upon certain conditions to be submitted to him on the admission of such ground of negotiations; secondly, to make the holy pontiff, Alexander II., arbiter of the differences between them; thirdly, to decide their respective claims by single combat, so as to avoid the effusion of so much blood.[4]

[3] "It were a very presumptuous thing for me," says king Harold, in his answer to one of the duke's messages, which charges him with his breach of oath, "to have sworn away to you another's inheritance (meaning the kingdom), without the general convention and decree of the Senate and people." This shows that the kingdom could not be disposed of without the consent of the states.—Haddon MSS., B. M.

[4] The conditions of the duel were, that he who conquered should possess the kingdom after putting his adversary to death, unless he surrendered and cried out *merci* for his life. This proposal was by no means palatable to king Harold, who, without the slightest imputation upon his personal valour, quite as daring and chivalrous as the duke's, would have been placing himself upon an inequality, in thus risking a crown of which he was in possession. Besides, according to the prevalent superstition of the day, having broken his promises to the duke, he might shrink from staking the fortunes of the nation on his personal merits and success.

It was supposed that the last of these propositions would have been eagerly accepted by king Harold, who might thus have deprived his enemy of any superiority he possessed in the numbers and discipline of his veteran army. The chances with reference to their relative forces were evidently against him. The Norman historians maintain that Harold's courage,[5] till then unquestionable, was damped by the injustice of his cause, in addition to which some weight may be allowed to the splendid reputation acquired by the duke in feats of arms, which, after his overthrow of the Earl of Anjou, ranked the highest, perhaps, of any in Europe.[6]

William, upon the rejection of these propositions, called his council of great barons, and declared that, his different letters and messages having been all employed in vain, he was desirous of acquainting them with his intention of holding a personal communication with Harold himself. "I will yet try what I can do by seeing and speaking to himself. I wish to convince him of the guilt of perjury, the punishment of which he is about to bring upon his own head, should he longer refuse to perform his sacred promise. Nay, if he would listen to reason, I would consent that he should retain the entire country of Northumberland, up to the borders of Scotland itself."[7]

[5] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne; W. Pict.

[6] Among other invaluable treasures contained in the Tower, was recently to be seen in the armoury what is stated to have been the duke's coat of arms. This, from its size and weight, must have been worn by a man of great strength and lofty stature. It is of the same form and workmanship as the specimens which are shown at the British Museum as having belonged to Francis I., to Rodolph of Habsburg, and other doughty knights of their day.

[7] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham; Wace.

Though much cannot be said, we fear, for William's sincerity in making these propositions, they certainly do credit to his tact and judgment. It was attempting to throw upon Harold the odium of a devastating war. It was holding forth to the world that, rather than wade to a throne through a sea of blood, than risk the fearful consequences by which such a war must inevitably be followed, he preferred to offer any terms which honour and justice would admit. Nay, he delayed to attack his adversary, who was daily gaining fresh strength, and to whom time was more precious than the reinforcements he continued to receive. The baronial council approved of his motives, but earnestly entreated that whatever he did should be done promptly, as the militia and volunteers were pouring into Harold's camp every hour.[8] "Upon my honour, as a soldier," was the duke's reply, "if I fail to gain over Harold as a friend in this interview, the battle shall be fought to-morrow."[9]

Accompanied by only twenty knights, the duke then mounted his charger, and rode at speed towards the English camp. Immediately in his rear, however, there followed a hundred Norman knights, attended by one thousand men at arms, who never lost sight of their prince's person. When he had reached the farthest barrier, noting well the excellent position and its defences, he sent a messenger to Harold's tent, apprising him of his arrival, and his extreme desire to hold parley with him in the open field, bringing with him such lords and retainers as he might deem fit. He begged him not to entertain the least suspicion, as his

[8] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Walsingham; Wace.

[9] Hist. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Wace.

sole desire was to come to some arrangement advantageous to them both. Harold's brother, Gurth, received the envoy; but was instructed to send him back with sharp words, declaring that the king refused to speak with the duke in the open plain, and that if the latter had any further conditions to offer, he should send them by letter, and the king would know how to answer them.[1]

This uncourteous reply being reported to the duke, who considered it in the light of an ultimatum, he declared "that he had left nothing undone to avert the dread appeal to arms," the fatal consequences of which no one was better able to predict than himself.

Harold, on his side, summoned his chief lords and officers, to whom he reported the last propositions made by William for their final deliberation. These conveyed the offer of Northumberland, and the whole country bounded by the river Humber, comprehending the greater portion of the county of York; a generous concession, perhaps, under all the circumstances, but to which there was one fatal objection, that of disposing of territories which did not then belong to him. To the earl, his brother, he guaranteed the whole of the land and seignories held by the late earl Godwin, a liberality which shows how highly he estimated the character of Gurth, and the influence he exercised in the country. Failing Harold's acceptance of these propositions, duke William would declare him to be a perjurer, false to his word and honour. A strong discussion ensued, which was closed by Gurth, who, in an emphatic address, declared for war, "from a conviction," he said, "that, if

[1] Hist. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Wace.

Harold ceded the crown, William would soon deprive him of the dominion now so prodigally offered; for that he plainly saw, if admitted into the country, the Normans would first seize upon their estates; next on their wives and daughters; and, thirdly, take the goods and chattels out of their houses."

"You hear my brother," exclaimed Harold, "and I agree with him that it is our solemn duty to defend our families and ourselves; if we succeed, we shall reap immortal honour, and, instead of being deprived of all, you will receive each a fortune at my hands."[2] These sentiments were responded to by the nobles, who declared that they would fight to the last for their country; nay, exterminate the whole Norman people before they would yield;[3] and Harold finally announced to duke William their united resolution to submit the award to the God of battles.

Duke William now issued orders to prepare for encounter[4] on the morrow. Brief and anxious was the interval; and it is believed to have been more seriously employed by the Normans than by the English. This was owing to the character and policy of the Norman leader, not to any peculiarities in the disposition of the two people themselves. It was a grand occasion upon which to display the religious pomp and circumstance which formed part of his system, and entered both into his military and his political calculations.[5] Full of diffi-

[2] "Et vous recevrez de moi des biens en abondance."—Duchesne; Hist. de Nor. [3] Ibid.

[4] It was fought on Saturday, the 14th October, 1066, Harold's birthday, at a spot called Heathfield, seven miles from Hastings, where the town of Battle stands.—Lives of the Queens of England.

[5] His Norman contemporaries, adopting the same ideas, tried to fix a charge of irreligion upon the English people. *Væ victis* seems to have

culties and perils as had been his active and stormy career, never at any juncture had he played for so vast a stake; for one which equally demanded all his efforts —all the genius and resources of his fertile mind. A people triumphant over the Danes, the Scotch, the Welsh, and all invaders for upwards of a century, was to be struck down and subdued by force. That people was now more powerful than at any former period of its history.

Intrepid and confident as he was, ample grounds existed for William's anxiety to treat even with one whom he at the same time stigmatised as false and perjured; and the result showed that his ineffectual efforts to conciliate the English were founded upon sound policy; for, the sword once unsheathed, Hastings was, in fact, only the commencement of a long exterminating war between the two nations, which continued up to the period when Normandy was annexed to France. The battle fought at Heathfield was only one of a series of efforts in defence of our national independence and constitutional freedom.[6] The alternation of invasions, also, during these incessant struggles, was mutual; England retook Normandy, and for a century and a half both people gathered equally bitter fruits from the stern feudal system established over them. Thus the mild beneficent government of Normandy was converted into a reign of terror over both countries, in the hands of a military oppressor and of his immediate descendants, till the unnatural and bloody compact, made by usurping ambition, was for ever broken.

been the motto employed by them in the base, ungenerous strictures cast upon the English after the Conquest. Thus they were called barbarians at the battle of Hastings.—W. Pict. à Duchesne, fol. ed. p. 202; Ord. Vit.

[6] History of England, by Sir J. Mackintosh, vol. i.

But William was not the less resolved because he knew that he must engage in a lengthened and destructive war, in addition to those civil conflicts which had so long wasted the resources of his native land. When he ordered prayers to be recited throughout the whole camp, and leaders, knights, and soldiers to attend confession, shrive, and prepare for battle, he felt that no common struggle was approaching; and that thousands of claimants upon the lavish promises he had made would cancel their bonds in the general carnage, before next set of sun.

The priests, with croziers in their hands, and reading their litanies, went through all the ranks, and visited all the positions and outposts of his mighty host. Even after giving orders to his several leaders, the duke's last public act, previously to the onset, was, as usual with him, a religious one. Odo, bishop of Bayeux, celebrated mass before the entire army, and invited them to join him in a vow, never more to eat flesh on the anniversary of that day; a requisition with which, with the awful chances before them, men of all ranks were easily induced to comply.

The leaders on both sides, apprehensive of a night attack, ordered strict watch and ward to be observed; each was cautious to visit his outposts in person. The English are described, by nearly all the Norman chroniclers, as having passed the night in riot and disorder; but we are bound to receive such an assertion, originating with their enemies, though repeated by most subsequent English writers, with some degree of caution.[7] It is most probably one of the calumnies of exulting victory; and, had king Harold won the day, nothing

[7] W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

would have been recorded of the orgies celebrated the preceding evening in the Anglo-Saxon camp.[8] It is asserted that the English sought to sustain their courage by riotous excesses; that they were heard shouting *wassail* and *drink heal*, "wish health," and "drink health," amidst scenes of intemperance and confusion, worthy only of barbarians. By some writers it is even added that they were intoxicated during the action, and that they fought more like beasts than men.[9]

By dawn of day, the Norman army was drawn out in battle array, and William took his station on a small eminence, in front of his position, having the relics, it is said, on which Harold had forsworn himself, round his neck, and with the consecrated standard unfurled by his side. "It is not only to acquire a kingdom," he began, "that I brought you hither, O gallant Normans, the first of men, the most renowned for victory over thrice your numbers, far over the deep sea. No! for, while your devotion to my cause deserves my warmest gratitude, it is to punish the English for the murders and misdeeds committed by them. Did they not slay in cold blood the young prince Alfred, the brother of their deceased king? Did they not, by treason, rise and massacre the Danes throughout the breadth of the land, even at public festivals to which they invited their victims; and does not the blood of your ancestors cry for vengeance from the ground? There, before you, stand the malefactors awaiting their sentence; such crimes deserve death; and it is for you to execute it at the point of the sword. By victory, O Normans! you will

[8] Wace; Chron. de Nor.

[9] W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Wace.

obtain vengeance, fortune, spoil; yea, spoil beyond your hopes: by defeat certain death; for no bravery nor conduct of mine can save you from that ignominious fate; there are no ships, and nothing is left but to assure yourselves of the protection of Heaven, and in that to confide and conquer.

"If *I* become king of England, *you* will be the owners of the land. Before you is the son of that Godwin, who was charged with the murder of my unhappy cousin. You only can avenge me. Oh, remember the glorious actions of our ancestors—the conquest of Sicily—your own exploits against Henry of France, and his greatest allies; and then think of all the treasures which this country will afford you. You are in a hostile country, unknown to you, and must make it yours; for before you is the sword, the vast ocean behind, and no place of retreat; so that, if you will not contend for glory, you must fight for life." [1]

William had drawn up his army in three divisions, and now gave orders for the attack.[2] While putting on his armour, the squires in their haste placed the back of his cuirass before,[3] upon which, observing that they regarded it as an evil omen, he jested upon the matter. "I have seen many who would scarcely have ventured into the field, on account of a mere error like this; but I never believed in omens, nor in fortune-telling, nor in divinations of any kind. My trust is in God only; and, if this mistake dishearten you, I will give

[1] Sir J. Mackintosh, Hist. of Eng.; Hayward; Chron. de Nor. apud Bouguet, xiii. 230-1; W. Piet.

[2] During this interval, the great prelates, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Goisfred, of Coutances, were busy lining their purses, by receiving confessions, bestowing benedictions, and imposing penances not a few.—Hist. de Nor.; Wace.

[3] W. Piet.; Wace; W. Malms.

you cause for joy; for if it betoken anything, it is that the power of my dukedom shall be made a kingdom, and that I, who was a duke, shall be a king."[4] Again, he observed to the different leaders and nobles before entering the field: "To-day, assuredly my fortune will change; and I shall be a king, or nothing, before nightfall."

The grand consecrated banner was immediately advanced. Rollo de Terni, Earl of Conches, was the ducal standard-bearer by old hereditary claim; and the duke, inviting him to take charge of it, said: "You carry it in right of your birth, and I shall never deprive you of it." That lord, however, as well as Guiffard, Count de Longueville, having declined the honour, upon the plea of more active duties, it was entrusted to the hands of Toustain du Blanc, lord of Bec Crespin.[5] The duke then called for his favourite steed, the famous Bayard, which had been presented to him by the King of Spain, on occasion of the Earl of Longueville returning from his pilgrimage to St. Jago of Compostella. Extending his hand to take the reins of his noble charger, as he is represented in the Bayeux tapestry,[6] he vaulted into the saddle, while all around him expressed their admiration of his martial appearance and splendid horsemanship, as the fiery Bayard pranced and curvetted under his princely burden.[7] "Where," cried the Count de Touzay, "shall we see a knight so fairly armed, who bears himself so nobly, carries his

[4] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Wace.

[5] W. Pict. 127.

[6] For an interesting account of the Bayeux tapestry, in which queen Matilda *stitched* the history of the Conquest, we refer the reader to Miss Strickland's admirable and amusing "Lives of the English Queens."

[7] Wace; Chron. de Nor.

heavy arms so lightly, or couches his lance with so much grace. Let him fight and he will overcome, and shame befall him who shall fail him at need."

A shout of exultation welcomed him as he rode along the ranks;[8] and the spectacle of two such armies, led by the most warlike and experienced generals of their age, has been described, by contemporary historians, as grand and imposing in the extreme. They were now in sight of each other; and the flower of European chivalry[9] was there assembled, the arbiter of empire upon that memorable battle-ground. Veterans and volunteers of different states composed the bulk of the ducal army, in which the great predominance of knights, nobles, and princes, was the distinguishing feature. Of the first of his three corps William gave the command to Roger de Montgomery, and to Fitzosborne, Count de Breteuil; of the second, to Geoffrey Martel, attended by Hugues, a German prince of high repute, and some Norman leaders of known skill. The duke placed himself at the head of the third, formed wholly of Normans, including his cavalry, which had special instructions to support the confederate bodies upon either wing, as the exigencies of the day might require. In this likewise was placed the reserve, under his

[8] Wace; Chron. de Nor.

[9] There is in the same group (in the Bayeux tapestry) the figure of a knight armed *cap-à-pié* in the close-fitting ring-armour, and conical helmet, worn by the Norman chivalry of that era, with a gonfalon attached to his lance, something after the fashion of the streamer, which forms part of the paraphernalia of the modern lancer, with this difference, that the gonfalon of the ancient knight was adorned with his device or armorial bearing, and served the purpose of a banner—a general rallying point for his followers. The knightly figure is believed to have been the redoubtable Conqueror of this realm.—Lives of the Queens of England.

immediate orders, to be advanced only in case of possible extremity, to retrieve the fate of the day. The archers filled up the points of each corps, discharging also the duty of light troops or voltigeurs, and in this order they advanced to the attack.[1]

Before the papal banner, borne by Toustain the Fair, rode the gigantic warrior and minstrel Taillefer, singing the famous song of Roland, the chivalrous peer of Charlemagne, in which the whole army joined.[2] Advancing at the head of the army, the warrior-minstrel challenged any one of the English to a single combat, which being accepted, he slew the first and second, but was himself slain by the third assailant. Upon this the Normans commenced the attack.

Harold had arrayed his army in two divisions; the first destined to defend his entrenched positions, advantageously chosen upon an eminence; the second chiefly composed of the militia and London bands, forming the rear-ward and reserve; and here, too, the royal standard of England—a warrior armed—was displayed. He had resolved to act upon the defensive, and, being deficient in cavalry, he had strengthened his van and advanced body with select troops, added to the men of Kent, who, from long custom, claimed that post of honour, and who, after skirmishing with the enemy's light infantry, fell back upon the dense masses in their rear. King Harold, like the duke, had harangued his troops with great spirit previously to their joining battle. He recalled to their remembrance the miseries they had sustained, especially from the Danes, by their

[1] W. Pict.; Wace; Chron. de Nor.

[2] W. of Malms.; M. of West.; Hen. of Hunt.; W. Gemit.; Henry; Rapin; Speed; Tyrell; Lingard.

subjection to a foreign yoke. Would they tamely behold the spoil and ruin of their common land,[3] their free government, their wealth, their long prosperity under the good king Edward,—of their wives, their children, their homes? He painted, in strong colours, the rifling of their property, the violation of their wives and daughters; the destruction, or what is worse, the oppression and slavery of all classes of the people. "Whether," he concluded, "you are to endure these, or never to fear them more, depends upon yourselves, and must be sought in the result of this day's fight.[4] Be men! close firm your ranks; obey my voice, and acquit yourselves as you shall see your king."

In point of strength and numbers, the armies were nearly equal. In nerve and muscle the English were far superior, as their large and well-knit frames, the size of their poleaxes and swords, and the length of their darts, in addition to the strength of their bucklers, sufficiently proved. They were also more numerous and united than the Normans, acting upon the defensive in serried bodies, protected by artificial bulwarks called *pavises;* but all these were more than counterbalanced by the duke's superior tactics, his greater experience and skill in arms. He possessed an immense superiority as well in the discipline of his army as in the character and numbers of his bowmen and his cavalry, the absence of which in his army has been pronounced a capital error on the side of Harold. Again the Earl of York, his brother, implored that he might

[3] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Hayward; Hume; Henry; Lingard; Mackintosh.

[4] Henderson; Hayward; Abbé Prévost; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Duchesne; Mazeres; Wace.

be permitted to lead the battle, while the king himself, consulting the safety of his people rather than his own, should command the reserve. "If you are resolved to fight," he argued, "you should employ your authority in collecting a new army to meet the Normans in case of need. If you will commit the conduct of this force to me, I will not fail to prove both the love of a brother and the care and courage of a commander. For, as I am not at all obliged to the duke by oath, I shall either prevail with a better cause, or die with an easier conscience." Harold strenuously opposed any alteration in his plans.[5] "What," he exclaimed, "would you have me fly before a company of priests?" alluding to the Norman custom of shaving their chins from the example set by the duke. "But, whatever they are, I have digested in my mind the hardest events of battle; and never will I incur a suspicion of the infamy of cowardice."[6] In this brave mood he met the battle.

The first onset of the Normans was terrible. It was such as only Harold's veterans, trained under his own eye, long inured to war and victory, could have sustained; for such were the duke's precautions that, before they could close with the Normans, they were saluted with a repeated storm of arrows, such as had before swept the doughtiest chivalry of France before it. But the English, though pierced with many a wound, closed their ranks, and faltered not. They were instructed by Harold to cover themselves by joining their targets, while they advanced to close with the enemy. The duke made the attack with his right wing, a divi-

[5] "And thus," says the quaint Hayward, "doth fortune oftentime deal with men, as executioners do with condemned persons: she will first blindfold, and then dispatch them."

[6] Hayward; Henderson.

sion of which was commanded by Robert Fitz Beaumont, a young commander of great promise. It was his object to carry the advanced position occupied by the Kentish men sustained by Harold and his veterans; and to drive them back upon their entrenchments. Finding that his deadly showers of arrows, though perfectly new to the English, and for some moments opening their ranks by their death-bolts, failed to produce the usual effect, and that his first onset was as firmly received and repulsed as if not an arrow had flown, the duke ordered his heavy horse to make a charge through the opened ranks of his archers and men-at-arms.

But the charge was received upon the point of the English lance, the sole weapon on that eventful day to counterpoise the power of the Norman cavalry and spear. Many a horseman reeled in the dust; and, upon renewing the charge, few approached close enough to give the heroic English the same advantage. The duke immediately threw his squadrons into wings, and through the open spaces, he gave orders for the veteran infantry to advance in line and charge. Then, indeed, came the shock of battle—the veteran Normans composing part of William's centre coming to close handstrokes with the unbroken van of Harold, consisting of his stanchest soldiers, headed by the Kentish men. The conflict was maintained with spirit on both sides. The carnage, like the shock, was horrible; spear and lance were thrown aside; and the pole and battle-axe and the sword were the only weapons employed. The English asked no more than to fight hand to hand; and took a fearful vengeance for the lives of their comrades, who had fallen by the arrows of the Normans. The latter began to

waver; but the duke was at hand to reinforce Montgomery and De Beaumont at the weak points; yet while he maintained the combat he was unable to gain the least ground, much less to dislodge the English. It was in vain that the archers plied their bows, followed by the men at arms, who opened the spaces for the repeated charges of the cavalry, gallantly made only to be more gallantly repulsed.

Harold, too, had fortified his line of entrenchments in such a manner as to provide his men with some cover from the long bows and spears of the Normans, and give due advantage to the old English battle-axe in a close defensive contact with William's serried ranks. "Their feet steady, their hands diligent, their eyes keen and watchful, their hearts resolute; their cool stern valour was not misguided by their hate; nor was their hate cooled by their wary courage."

The duke, after some hours' conflict of this deadly kind, was scarcely able to keep his front ranks in order, although supported by fresh reinforcements and the renewed attacks of his horse. With them the English veterans knew how to deal; their only annoyance and their dread was of the winged arrows, which showered so thick that they seemed to have the enemy in the midst of them. Neither steel nor target was proof against these missiles; for every hand, every finger's breadth, was an exposed point for many a piercing wound; and the Normans, by shooting into the air, over the heads of the foremost ranks, slew numbers in the centre and rear destined to reinforce the van.[7]

King Harold, however, showed himself equal to the emergency. He was in every part of the field where

[7] Hayward; Henderson; Prévost; Chron. de Nor.

the pressure was most formidable, or where danger called him. Under many disadvantages he displayed all the bravery of a veteran, and the skill—according to the military practice of England at that period—of a great commander. He repaired all disasters, reinforced the weak points, and closed the broken ranks. He kept them in firm array, each portion of his force aiding the other, so as not only to bear the full brunt of the enemy's shocks, but to shake their opposing squadrons till they had difficulty to maintain their ground.

In the rear of his entrenched camp the king had constructed a breast-work made of strong osier branches, bound with ropes and supported by wooden pillars, which resisted the arrows. From behind this defence his soldiers could issue forth, and mount the ramparts in front, as safely as if they were clothed in complete armour.[8]

To carry this position the Normans must have entered the trenches and thence scaled the barriers; and the moment they gained the parapet the battle-axes would come into play. The duke, alarmed to find that he could make no impression, and that his troops were evidently losing confidence, ordered his second line of veteran Normans to advance; while he directed the archers to give their arrows such an aim as to ensure

[8] Norman chroniclers assert that, by this device of Harold's, the arrows could do little damage. It was like one immense shield, made of wicker-work, cemented with clay, and bound together; and with this immense wooden wall the entire English camp was surrounded. Thus, if the English had not too eagerly pursued the Normans in their pretended flight, far into the plain, where they were surrounded by the horse, spearmen, and archers, it would have been impossible that they could have lost the day; and a day not lost to them, would have been ruin to William.—Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Chron. de Nor.; Pict.

their falling within the English barriers, not against them.

In this attack, the duke exposed his person so far that it was more than once reported he was slain. He had three horses killed under him, and often necessarily alighted to fight on foot. His power of endurance was great; and he thus set an inspiriting example to his soldiers, applauding the brave, rebuking the slow, and shouting out with vehement gestures, that it was a shame for them, who had been victorious over all the nations they had encountered, to be so long withheld by the English from plucking the crown of victory. It was solely by the strength of such authority and example, that he could sustain the sinking spirits of his troops, who, in fair and close encounter with the English, showed their physical inferiority; a distinction which was still more marked with regard to the other foreigners.

This renewed attack was conducted upon a larger scale, strongly reinforced, but met with no better success. In a conflict for the possession of the first of the three barriers in the centre outlet, the slaughter was terrific; William advanced a fresh body of his Normans, all the efforts of the confederates being in vain; and it was then that the rage and horrors of this desperate combat reached their height. The loud cries of the English, engaged hand to hand with William's veterans, added to its terrors. "Holy Rood! God almighty!" was their battle-cry, as they struck the death-blow upon the foe with the last expiring energy of hate. Harold, though he had been wounded by the duke's stratagem of shooting over the barriers, was still seen encouraging his troops. Keeping his ranks close, he repeatedly admonished them that they should cut off the heads of the

Norman spears with their axes, and then slay their enemy, but for no consideration to break their order.

Unhappily this injunction was repeated in vain. The error committed by the English was fatal—one that in war can never be committed twice. The third sustained attack of the Normans having been repelled, they issued from their positions in great numbers, eager in pursuit; the retreat, if not feigned, was conducted with great order, and the English were in turn repulsed. Still they retained their former position; they had been engaged from break of day, and it was now high noon. After several ineffectual efforts, the Normans again began to give way; another report of the duke's death being circulated[9] added to the alarm; and if Harold at this juncture could have advanced in compact order, the victory had been his own.

The duke, however, was soon seen traversing his front ranks at full gallop, with his half-brother, Odo, holding the crozier, riding at his side. A few minutes later his appearance would have probably failed to retrieve the battle.

Perceiving that open attacks were of no avail, the

[9] The report having gained the rear, where an immense number of Norman clergy were awaiting the result, a general panic arose among the priests, clerks, and varlets, who were left with the women in charge of the baggage. They were with difficulty prevented from taking to instant flight. Several of the prelates had retired with the bishop of Coutances to an eminence, whence they made earnest intercession with prayer; but their chief confidence lay in the valour of their brother Odo, who fought like a lion, and occasionally hastened from William's side to raise their sinking spirits. He now arrived very opportunely to stop their retreat, and, having refreshed himself with some cups of wine, he resumed his arms, encouraged the soldiers, and, acting the part of the duke's aide-de-camp, was seen directing the officers and men at different points of the field.—W. Pict.; Hist. de Nor.

duke, after having restored order, had recourse to one of his favourite stratagems. He ordered a general attack on the positions of the English by his whole line, but added secret instructions that, in the heat of the *mêlée*, his soldiers should again retreat, and on this last occasion Harold could no longer restrain the impetuosity of his troops. Of a frank and noble spirit, their ardent hope of victory carried them away. They fell into the snare. The Normans, in compact order, turned upon their pursuers, who had broken rank, and seizing the advantage pierced their squares on all sides, and made a cruel butchery. Yet, in spite of fortune and of death, the English fled not, but, throwing themselves into small squares, sustained the fierce shocks of the enemy.

Other disasters, however, were at hand. The duke, in giving the signal to wheel and attack, ordered out his heavy horse and his reserve, and it was in vain that the English still fought like men who beheld the victory unjustly snatched out of their hands. Thrice with his cavalry he charged the English wings, while clouds of arrows darkened all the plain. From that moment the battle was decided, for Harold had already fallen. Towards the evening, while still unweariedly sustaining his army with his voice and hand, he was struck with an arrow through the left eye into the brain, and fell dead upon the field. His two brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, were also slain, with nearly all the nobles and knights, in the battle.

The old Anglo-Saxon heroism, worthy of a better fate, set in that dark eclipse; the battle-axe no longer availed against the Norman spear. Each spot of ground where they stood was a soldier's grave. At length, having

formed into one body, they retired in tolerable order to a rising ground. Thence they once more repulsed the Normans with great slaughter, whose commander, count Eustace, concluding that the English had received reinforcements, fled back to the duke, declaring that if he advanced any farther he was lost. While thus speaking he was struck to the ground, and the blood gushed from his nose and mouth. A number of Norman lords and knights fell in this last deadly conflict, till the duke withdrew his advanced force, and the English were permitted to retire unmolested. A considerable body of Normans perished in attempting the pursuit over low, marshy grounds, covered with sedges and reeds, where they were either stifled or destroyed by their enemies, who were well acquainted with the localities of the spot.

When the English retired to the acclivity, the Normans, entering the entrenchments, renewed the carnage at every step.[1] In the last attack the duke had another horse killed under him; but Toustain, at the head of the Norman knights, penetrated to the royal standard. There it was that the gallant earl, Harold's brother, and the young Leofwin, fell covered with wounds. It is stated by some writers[2] that Harold himself had retired to this hill, and that he had the grief of surviving to see the Norman banners raised over the spot where the English ensigns had waved. Certain it is that there was neither rout nor flight; so great was the despairing energy with which the English fought.[3] King Harold's

[1] W. Pict.; Wace; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Ord. Vit.; Henry; Hume.

[2] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. Pict.; Wace; Walsingham.

[3] It is stated that the duke, whenever he spoke of this terrific and hard-contested field, compared with which his former battles were mere

army was exterminated, but not vanquished; and England lay paralysed at the feet of the Conqueror.

It is also a singular fact that there is no record of a single prisoner having been made, or of a single English soldier having turned his back or fled. It is thus evident that the Normans owed their victory to William's stratagem, and to the use of the bow, both in reference to Harold's death[4] and to the slaughter it inflicted from a distance. Yet the English soon became the most formidable in that weapon of any nation, and the best marksmen in the world. They could discharge their bows ten or twelve ranks deep at the same moment and pierce almost as many of the enemy. It proved more fatal than the harquebuss and the caliver when first brought into use; and the wound was of such a nature as more effectually to disable the combatants, especially the horse.

It is asserted that the Conqueror, passing at night over the field of battle, observed a soldier in the act of piercing the dead body of a knight with his lance. It was the fallen king. Indignant at the sight, he ordered the man to be discharged, esteeming it as dishonourable, says the chronicle,[5] to strike an enemy when dead, as to turn his back upon him in fight.

So terminated the memorable battle of Hastings, to the astonishment of Europe, which had predicted Wil-

boys' play, distinguished it by the title of the Vale of Sanguelac, or the Lake of Blood. Other writers say that it was known by that name long before.—Vest. Ang.; Clarke; Speed; Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit.

[4] The body of Harold is said to have been found amidst a heap of slain by his mistress, Lady Edith, "with the swan's neck," who was induced to make the search at the request of two monks of Waltham, sent by Harold's mother.—Vest. Ang.; MS. Abb. Waltham; Speed Chron.

[5] Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.

liam's failure, and perhaps to that of the Conqueror himself. The results exceeded his most sanguine expectations. Though it was only the commencement of a twenty years' war, to establish his feudal system in opposition to the laws of the realm, it gave him ample time to mature his plans and lay down the scheme of his future policy; for he soon saw the necessity of making concessions, and temporising with a people possessing the heroism and frank magnanimous spirit of freedom, which appeared inherent in the Anglo-Saxons. He felt that he was anything but a conqueror over such a people, from whom he had barely won a single battle with the aid of half Europe's chivalry, by superior art and successful stratagem.

That night the duke pitched his tents upon the field which he had thus won. Soon after the ensuing dawn, he commanded his brother Odo to celebrate mass, and sing requiems for the dead. He at first refused to restore to the weeping parent the body of her son; but afterwards gave it up with those of his two brothers to the queen-mother, by whom they were interred in the abbey of Waltham.[6]

William had already registered his forces at St. Valery, and he could easily ascertain the Norman loss, stated by some writers to have amounted to between 6,000 and 7,000 men; but, upon sufficient data and closer examination, it would appear to have approached nearer to 12,000; without including the missing and wounded. Even this aggravated estimate of the

[6] The unfortunate mother placed over the tomb of her heroic son the following emphatic epitaph—*Harold Infelix;* and it was also a lasting monument to the brilliant fortune of his foe, *Guglielmus Felix.*—Thierry: W. Malms.

slaughter would leave that assigned to the English disproportionate, beyond the limits of probability or reasonable comparison. As recorded in the registry roll drawn up at the time and deposited at Westminster, we must admit Harold's army to have perished almost to a man, when the sum total of the slain is placed at upwards of 60,000. Though most English historians compute the loss of the Normans to have exceeded the 6,000 or 7,000 so recorded, they have not generally questioned the correctness of the Norman computation of the English loss, in the well founded belief that it was really enormous. Some error may easily have arisen as to placing the figures; or it may be conjectured that this number was intended to include the wounded and the prisoners, if any.[7]

The day after the victory, the duke returned to Hastings, about seven miles from the field, in order to refresh his army, and fix upon his plan of prosecuting his enterprise. He despatched messengers to announce his success to his friends and allies abroad. His duchess, now a queen, was found engaged in her devotions in the Benedictine priory of Notre Dame, near St. Sévère. The occasion was opportune for the celebration of a *Te Deum* to the God of Battles, which

[7] Though the loss of the English was immense during the last four hours of the battle, these returns on both sides are to be received with considerable caution. We must remember that it was William's object to strike terror into the people; to prostrate them after defeat; and the amazing disproportion was well calculated to produce such impression and to render the Norman soldiers truly formidable in the eyes of the nation.—Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Vie de Guilleaume, &c.; Abbé Prévost; M. West. M. Nagerel is the chief Norman authority from whom the numbers of the slain were taken—professedly from the registry rolls at Westminster.

was immediately performed with due ceremonies; and it was decreed that, from that time, the name of the priory should receive the pleasing addition of *Bonnes Nouvelles*—our lady of good news—which it retains to the present day.[8] To his Holiness the Pope, William made a present of king Harold's standard, representing a warrior in the act of striking, wrought curiously with gold and precious stones.

The complete destruction, or dispersion, of the English army, without an effort to rally; the bold measures and rapid progress of the Normans, with the national consternation everywhere produced; at once opened William's way to the long-disputed throne. That throne is still filled by the descendants of the Conqueror, and the greatest families in the realm date their origin from the battle of Hastings.[9] Even before he had resumed his triumphal march, his arrival in the capital was daily expected. A universal panic had seized the heart, and for a moment prostrated the energies, of the country; and its greatest leaders, instead of rallying and summoning forth its strength in their native districts, sunk under the blow, and supinely awaited the destiny preparing for them.

With the Conqueror's entry into London a new epoch in his extraordinary and eventful career opens upon our view. The military head of a small state seemed to have achieved, in a single battle, the most adventurous and enterprising conquest in the records of Europe. Assuming the monarch's sceptre, he thenceforth appears in the anomalous position of the ruler of a comparatively free people, to whose laws he was

[8] Ducarel, Nor. Antiq.

[9] Alison, Hist. of Europe, vol. i.; Hume, i.; Henry, iii.

bound to subscribe, and who submitted, however unwillingly, on such conditions, to acknowledge him as their sovereign. The consequences of such a compact were easily to be foreseen; but in the bitter fruits which it bore were also ripened the seeds of British constitutional liberty.

CHAPTER V.

William delays his march upon the capital—Renews his communications with the Continent—Severities exercised at Romney—Consternation of the country and the capital—Meeting of English lords and prelates—The earls Edwin and Morcar—Determination to oppose the Normans—Proposed coronation of Edgar Atheling—Distraction of the English councils—Flight of the two earls—Deputation to offer the crown to William—His conduct and policy—Prepares to build Norman fortresses—Tower of London—His coronation—Suspects the fidelity of the city—Return to his camp at Berkhampstead—Progress through the country—Devastations of the Normans—The feudal laws by which he was bound—Provision for his adherents—The English sacrificed—False position with the nation—Battle Abbey—System of government—Confiscating plans—Proscription of the English nobility and clergy—His military government—Secret police—The most powerful feudal sovereign of his times—Internal administration—Courts of law—Constitutional restraints—Anglo-Saxon laws and customs—Traditionary freedom from Egbert to Alfred and Edward the Confessor—Adverse to William's policy—Efforts to establish a virtual despotism unsuccessful—Brilliant court—Architectural labours—Privileges and charters—Confirms some old laws and customs—Appoints a Regency—Revisits Normandy—His object and policy—Oppression of the English—Plundered by the king's agents—His Norman court—English followers—Norman ladies—Anecdotes of the queen and her court—The royal progress through Normandy—Insurrections in England—Return of the Conqueror, and his prompt suppression of them—Law—Examination of the merits of rival parties—System pursued by William—How far his own—Its evils and advantages.

With his usual foresight and sagacity, William, before penetrating further into the country, opened effective communications with France and Normandy. So far from being unduly elevated by his mighty conquest,[1]

[1] It was deemed an extraordinary work of Providence that the English should have given up all for lost after the battle of Hastings, where a

with his characteristic caution and moderation, he marched to Dover,[2] being resolved to commence his progress to the capital from that point. The whole of the Conqueror's track from Hastings to Dover, and from Dover to London, is in Domesday Book marked by the commissioners with the significant word *devastated.* A line also may be easily traced on the maps of his entire route to the borough of Southwark.

William is believed to have first exercised military law at Romney[3] upon some of the inhabitants, for having put to death, as was reported, a party of his shipwrecked sailors. Such was the dread of his arrival in the town of Dover, that the tidings of the battle were almost the signal for its surrender. A disastrous fire attended his entry into the place; but, pleased with the submission of the inhabitants, the Conqueror is said to have remunerated the sufferers, as if to show that, having thus acknowledged his title, he treated them not as enemies but as subjects.

After restoring the fortifications, and leaving a strong garrison in the castle, he set out on his triumphal progress towards London.[4] Instead of proceeding by the

single army only, though a brave one, had perished. W. of Malms., l. iii.; Hallam; History and Government of the Middle Ages, ii. 158.

[2] Sir John Ashburnham, after Harold's defeat, defended Dover Castle against the invader, who caused him to be beheaded or put to the sword. The first of this family mentioned in our peerage is named Berham, sheriff of Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, and constable of Dover Castle, beheaded by William.

[3] The Normans set fire to it, and reduced it to ashes. The devastation of Romney, however, does not appear in the record. The filling up of the port is said to have occasioned the decay of Old Romney, whereas the new town was very flourishing in the Conqueror's time.

[4] After Harold was slain, Edwin and Morcar, Earls of Northumberland and Markland, had induced many of the nobility to declare Edgar Athe-

direct route, he conducted his army so as to secure the strong places along the coast by way of Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire; not a single district through which he passed manifesting the slightest symptom of resistance to his will.[5] At Wallingford he passed the Thames, and then directed his route through the important counties of Oxford, Buckingham, and Hertford, until he arrived at the castle of Berkhampstead. During this progress many of his troops fell sick and died, and it is stated that he was himself seized with a violent illness, which excited the alarm of those around him. As he was distressed however for provisions, and had given free range to the licentiousness of his soldiers, who devastated towns and villages, he pressed forward, after receiving the submission of the chief inhabitants, and in many cases hostages for their good conduct. It

ling their king; but the prelates not only crossed that purpose, but surrendered Edgar, the next heir from the Saxon kings, to the pleasure of the duke.

Again, when the duke, after his great victory at Hastings, marched his army towards Hertfordshire, one Frederic, Abbot of St. Albans, had caused the woods belonging to the church to be felled and the trees to be cast so thick in the way, that the duke was compelled to make a circuit to the castle of Berkhampstead. To this place the abbot, under sureties, came to him, and being asked why he alone dared offer that opposition, he replied, with an assured air, "that he had done no more than in conscience and nature he was bound to do; and if the residue of the clergy had borne the same mind, he should never have pierced the land so far." "Well," answered the duke, "I know that your clergy is powerful indeed, but if I live and prosper in my affairs, I shall govern their greatness well enough." Assuredly nothing sooner subverts a state, than that one set of subjects shall grow so great as to be able to overrule all the rest.—Hayward's Lives, &c.

[5] The paucity of places of defence was one cause why William so rapidly subdued the kingdom. The castles of Dover, Oxford, and Norwich are conjectured, though with no great probability, to be of Saxon origin.—Vestigia Ang. i. 174, 5.

was probably this necessity for resolute exertion which enabled him to throw off his infirmity contracted from the noxious vapours of the low marshy grounds, and much resembling the periodical agues or fevers incidental to them.

On repairing to Berkhampstead, William, still watchful and prudent, detached a part of his army to erect new fortifications in the capital, and to require the hostages who were delivered up to him. The gates were indeed thrown open; but he continued to linger in his camp till the military occupation of London was complete, and necessary preparations had been made for his coronation. Meanwhile, to show how much his mind was at ease, he amused himself with the diversions of hunting and hawking in the neighbourhood.[6]

Distraction reigned in the councils of the Anglo-Saxon lords and prelates. The feeble effort to raise Edgar Atheling to the throne before the Conqueror's arrival melted away at his approach.[7] The earls Edwin and Morcar, having gained over the primate Stigand, ventured to oppose the Conqueror's march,[8] but the

[6] W. Pict. 205; Ord. Vit. 522; T. Salis.; R. Hoveden.

[7] William purposely delayed his movements, in order to take advantage of circumstances; and, if possible, to ascend the throne without the legal restrictions exacted by the English from their sovereigns. He thus remained upwards of a week at Dover, partly to recruit his army, in which a fatal dysentery broke out, which compelled him to leave his sick in the fortress. This he repaired and placed in a very formidable state of defence. That at Hastings he also strongly fortified and regarrisoned, being, according to Ordericus Vitalis, the third which William restored or erected in England.—Hist. Ang.; Speed; Baker; Vest. Ang. Ord. Vit.

[8] With regard to the opposition offered by the men of Kent, during the Conqueror's advance, by which it has been supposed they succeeded in retaining their laws and customs, especially that of gavelkind, existing

rout of the London troops by 500 Norman horse carried fresh dismay into the Anglo-Saxon party. The two earls are said to have fled to their estates, but the bishops and clergy, especially those who had been promoted by King Edward, sought by their influence to induce the inhabitants to open their gates to the Conqueror. A deputation was appointed to wait upon the duke, headed by Aldred, archbishop of York, accompanied by Edgar Atheling, Wolstane, bishop of Worcester, Wilfred, bishop of Hereford, and other prelates and nobles.

William received them in his camp at Berkhampstead, and, after they had tendered the usual pledges for their allegiance, consented to receive them into favour. It is believed that the primate Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, refused to attend, or to perform the ceremony of the duke's coronation—a want of policy which soon opened the way for his successor, the ambitious Lanfranc.

Aldred, in the name of the deputation, invited William to ascend the vacant throne, there being no prince more worthy to assume the reins of government.[9] The duke, by no means anxious to accept the offer upon the conditions prescribed to the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, replied

to this day, the whole would seem to be an ingenious fiction, flattering to national pride and feeling. We find no allusion in "William of Poitou," or in the most impartial of our early historians, to any terms made by the people of Kent for the preservation of their ancient laws and privileges. They are stated to have approached the Conqueror, as king Malcolm did Macbeth, with a moving forest to distract his attention, and hide perhaps the paucity of their numbers, and to have declared that they preferred death to the loss of their laws, which William promised to respect.—Speed ; Tyrrell ; Mazeres.

[9] It has been said that William, like Augustus, came to the empire neither by conquest nor by usurpation, nor inheritance, nor election ; but by a strange mixture of all these rights.—Vestigia Anglicana.

"that he was more desirous to see peace established throughout the land than even to wear a crown," and expressed at the same time a wish that the ceremony of his coronation should be delayed, until his consort, the duchess Matilda, should arrive to participate in that ceremony. On being reminded of the inconvenience of delay, and its being contrary to English customs, he consented to accept the title of king, and gave orders that the coronation should take place at the celebration of the approaching Christmas festival; just two months from the date of his entering London.[1]

During the interval, William appears to have already engaged in plans for the construction of those fortresses to overawe his new subjects, afterwards carried to such an extent in all the principal towns, and along the line of coasts in every direction. Nor is it improbable that he now commenced that vast military edifice, the Tower; —the grand point of support for the long-meditated royal and baronial fortresses invested with their humbler terrors, in progress through the rural districts, each laying claim to that sad distinction: "a prison and a palace on each hand." The royal architect and engineer whose designs were adopted by the ducal council was Gundulph, bishop of Rochester, who had previously erected the castle of Hurstmonceux upon the spot where a wooden fort had stood. Next perhaps, to the more splendid but less gloomy and terrific palace-fortress of Windsor, the grand Tower possessed

[1] "The duke, presently despatched to London, was received with many declarations of joy, the lesser in heart, the fairer in appearance, and upon Christmas-day next following was crowned king. Now the means whereby this victory was assured were the very same whereby it was achieved; even by a stiff and rigorous hand."—Hayward. See also Sir J. Mackintosh, vol. i.

the pre-eminent advantage of a royal residence, and a stronghold in the event of any outbreak in a capital which had evinced so much disposition to resist.[2]

The day of William's coronation having arrived, Aldred, archbishop of York, was selected for the august ceremony of placing the crown upon the Conqueror's brows. But more sumptuous and magnificent preparations were reserved for the second event of this kind, upon the arrival of the duchess Matilda.[3] The first scene of William's royalty was opened in Westminster abbey, which rang with the armed tread of Norman knights and barons, whose splendid retinue, however, was purposely preceded by that of the English lords. Everything was arrayed in a corresponding style of chivalric pomp and stateliness;[4] nor was the absence of the

[2] The Tower appears to have been the fourth of those grand military structures erected in England about the period of William's first coronation in 1066. The castle of Winchester was built in 1067; that of Chichester was the sixth; and that of Arundel, in 1068, the seventh, with another at Exeter in the same year. Those of Warwick, Nottingham, York, Lincoln, and Huntingdon, were all built during one year. There was a second and stronger fortress raised at York, and in some other places, while the few Saxon edifices were greatly fortified and extended. Cambridge, Ely, and Oxford, were the sites of others; but the castles of Chester and Stafford were not erected till the year 1076. They had all of them Norman governors, and often Norman garrisons, the better to hold the English in awe and stern subjection. "Imperium iis artibus facillime retinetur quibus partum est."—Sal. Cat.

[3] W. of Pict.; W. of Malms.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham; Ypodigma; S. Dunelm; Hayward; Abbé Prévost; Henderson.

[4] On the preceding afternoon, we are told, he entered the city on horseback, and took up his abode at the palace of Blackfriars. On Christmas morning he took boat to London Bridge, repaired to a house near London-stone, and thence proceeded at the head of a splendid cavalcade, surrounded with all the trappings of royalty. Near his person, next to the Norman banners, rode the English nobles and officers of state.—Chron. Sax.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

duchess an obstacle to the attendance of the rank and beauty of the land. The archbishop pronounced an address suitable to an occasion so extraordinary; and in compliance with the Anglo-Saxon laws, asked the English if they chose to accept William as their king?[5] The same question was put by the bishop of Coutances to the Normans; and, both having declared their assent by general acclamation, William took the oath uniformly tendered at their coronation to the Anglo-Saxon monarchs. This comprehended a full acknowledgment of the laws of king Edward, which ensured certain privileges to different classes in the state, containing the elements of constitutional liberty, as opposed to the nature of a pure despotism.[6] After binding himself to other conditions in support of the common laws and customs, William also took an oath to protect those of the church; to administer justice, to repress violence, and at the instant when the prelate placed the crown

[5] Therefore we must conclude that there could exist no right, without the consent of the Estates of the kingdom, from relationship to or adoption by king Edward, to justify the invasion of duke William.—Haddon MS. Papers, &c., B. M.

[6] See a curious work entitled *Argumentum Antinormanicum, B. Museum; also Hallam, Hist. and Govern. of the Middle Ages*, i. 159.

The account of the coronation by some of the Norman historians who followed William is to be received with extreme caution. It would otherwise be difficult for us to reconcile William's professions and his alleged popularity at the outset with the oppressed and wretched condition of the country subsequently. For we are told how he enjoined all his great men to observe equity in all their actions, and ever to regard that Eternal Monarch by whose assistance they had overcome; that, though they were victors, they ought not to oppress the vanquished, who were Christians as well as themselves, lest they might by their injuries provoke those to rise up against them whom they had already subdued.—W. Pict.; Tyrrell; Hallam; Brodie; Lingard; Professor Smythe, Lectures on M. Hist.; Sir J. Mackintosh.

upon his head, a serene joy, we are told, diffused itself over the features of all the spectators.

The Norman guards, however, mistaking the acclamations for some tumult endangering the life of the new king, fell upon the people outside, and began to set fire to the houses; nor was it till king William himself appeared in his state robes to assure them of his safety that their apprehensions were allayed, and the riot ceased.[7]

Almost immediately after his coronation, king William repaired to his favourite quarters at Berkhampstead, where, under the guise perhaps of pursuing the field sports he so much loved, he withdrew from danger, and gave time for the unruly Londoners, whose prowess he had experienced at Hastings, to accommodate their ideas to the rule of a foreign sovereign. Here he held open court, and, by his frank and affable carriage, as if intent only upon entertaining his new English lords who flocked round him, inviting all the most influential princes and thanes to hunt and hawk and feast with him, and flattering their national foibles[8] till he felt himself strong enough to seize their lands, succeeded in raising high expectations of the justice and clemency of his

[7] One might suppose the Normans to have been fire-worshippers, from the extreme love they showed for incendiarism even upon the most trifling occasions. Princes, nobles, and even mere youths, vied with each other in the employment of their favourite element; for which we may vouch the example of William's own sons, when they set fire to one of the towns of king Philip of France, at whose court they were residing.—W. Pict.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist.; Duchesne.

[8] The conduct of William at the outset of his reign has given rise to different views and discussions respecting his real motives. Whether he was an unwilling legitimate monarch, and aimed at becoming a pure despot, or whether he was only provoked into tyranny by resistance, he was a profound politician.—Alison; Hallam; Brodie; Smythe.

future reign. With the wary policy which he had so successfully practised in Normandy, he at first bestowed offices of high trust upon Englishmen, even upon those in whom their family descent and high renown might have raised the most aspiring thoughts.[9]

Soon afterwards, William relinquished his field sports and banquetings to make a progress through Essex and other parts, and receive the homage of those lords and prelates who had declined to attend at his coronation. Among these ranked the two brother earls, Edwin and Morcar, whose subsequent conduct offered so striking a contrast to their new professions.[1]

That the new monarch was in some degree the slave of the feudal policy he sought to exercise over all classes, and of his own systematic aggrandisement, no one can doubt who has traced step by step the difficulties and vicissitudes of his strange and unprecedented career. He soon found it impossible to govern with the same success as in Normandy, and to dictate new laws to England. He could not even display the same clemency and impartiality; for he felt bound to recompense, at the expense of the vanquished, the nobles and the army who had so zealously supported him. Thus his desire to promote the prosperity and happiness of

[9] Hallam ; Hist. of Middle Ages, 17, 161 ; Ord. Vit. 520 ; Duchesne ; Hist. Nor., &c.

[1] For some time William seemed really desirous of conciliating these two distinguished noblemen, deservedly beloved by the people, as well as Edgar Atheling, whom he treated with kindness and respect. His change of policy was probably the work of those needy adventurers who followed him. Having acquired expensive habits, their desires were insatiable ; and, to gratify their demands, almost the whole landed property of England was in a few years confiscated. Hardly any conquest since the fall of Rome has been so violent or attended with such spoliation, contumely, and insult.—Alison ; Hist. of Europe ; Hume i. ; Thierry ii. ; i. 16.

the English, had he been sincere, would have been impracticable. The sums obtained from Harold's treasury were soon exhausted, partly in paying the troops, and partly in building, or in benefactions to different monasteries and public charities.

The foundation of the church and abbey of St. Martin, known by the name of Battle Abbey, on the spot where Harold was said to have raised his standard, or to have fallen,[2] was no trivial expense. It was one of those objects, combining worldly pride, piety, and charity, in which both William and his consort felt deeply interested, as tending to perpetuate at once their public and devotional labours and their names.[3] But these were the occupations of William's less anxious hours, when he could withdraw his attention from the cares of a government at variance with the Anglo-Saxon laws, so ill defined between the circumstances of conquest and election, and consequently so ill adapted for the attainment of popular and useful purposes. Old customs, laws, and habits offered to such a government a passive but often effectual resistance, defying repeated attempts either to overthrow them or to engraft upon them to any extent foreign institutions, much less

[2] W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.

[3] Battle Abbey has been celebrated by nearly all chroniclers in almost every language, especially in Latin verse, and the quaint English of Robert of Gloucester. William and Matilda built several others in England, particularly one at Bermondsey, but of which not any remains so entire still exist. A portion of Battle Abbey has since been converted into a mansion, recently the property and the residence of the Webster family. It must have been a truly noble pile; the gate-house is preserved in its pristine state, and in it are held the magisterial sessions relating to the jurisdiction of the place. The hall was magnificent indeed; and the kitchen, arched over throughout, was so spacious as to contain five fire-places.—Fabyan's Chron.; Ducarel; Vestigia Ang.; Monasticon.

usages and manners, through the bulk of the community.

The Wittenagemote, however, or council of wise men, by no means founded upon broad and popular principles under the Anglo-Saxons, became, under the influence of the Conquest, more and more aristocratical. So far from admitting the Commons to its assemblies, these gradually became less frequent, till they at last caused an important event.[4] In fact, with the progress of the feudal system, it changed the character of its representation, and it was imperceptibly merged in the great council of the Norman prelates and barons, in which the influence of William was as predominant as that of an administration in our modern House of Commons. The masses, much less the servile population, were not represented in it; their privileges were interwoven with the feudal system; and it is the opinion of Mr. Turner[5] that the Wittenagemote never consisted of any portion of what we should term the Commons.

England, in truth, was destined to go through a political ordeal, from which, terrible as it was, she rose unsullied, erect, and fearless as before. It soon became manifest that, with all the aid of mercenary armies and dungeon towers, no conquest, no absolute dominion, could destroy a whole people's knowledge of freedom, habits of thought, usages, and language. William no doubt was perfectly sensible of this great truth, though his avarice and ambition, impelled by the system pursued by himself and his followers, led him greatly to underrate its strength, and blinded him to its final triumph under the rule of his not distant successors. For it required no uncommon

[4] Professor Smythe, Lec. on Modern Hist., Lec. v. 154.

[5] Anglo-Saxons, vol. i. Smythe, Lec. v. idem.

share of sagacity to discover that, in the words of a distinguished and impartial writer,[6] if the land of a country be appropriated by a few, and the many have *no manufactures to exchange* for the produce of the soil, the lot of the latter must under any form of government be slavery and wretchedness. Without an equivalent to purchase the means of subsistence, they have only the melancholy alternative of starving or of submitting to the conditions which the owners of the soil choose to impose. Such was the feudal system under which every large estate was a petty principality with one absolute lord, whose vast number of dependants, while they constituted his pride and boast, as well as the foundation of his power, were only retained on the condition of implicit obedience.[7]

Next to the establishment of the feudal power, that of a strict system of police was the object of William's earliest attention. Instead of the effective self-government introduced by the great Alfred and his successors, throughout the districts and hundreds, by means of the resident authorities in local courts, he aimed at substituting for it the feudal sway of the barons, under the military suzerainship so favourable to the centralising power of the crown.[8] Such a police, as experienced in Normandy, had its advantages in curbing the military and feudal licence, especially of the minor barons and their satellites, and in preserving the public peace. So ably and successfully did he administer it for some

[6] Brodie, Intro. to Hist. of the British Empire, &c. i. p. 2.

[7] Brodie, ibid.

[8] Hallam ; Brodie ; Mackintosh ; Lingard. William had introduced the feudal system, and those who held immediately of the Crown, became in consequence members of the great national council.—Smythe, Lecture v. 153.

period after his accession, that travellers and individuals we are told, of every rank,[9] might traverse the country with safety from end to end. While productive, however, of some collateral benefits, this system was subject to great abuse, tainted as it was with the inherent vice of general and absolute as distinct from local and restricted rule, such as had obtained under the Anglo-Saxon kings. Its dangerous tendency under the control of the Crown was first shown by the illegal arrest of the Earl of Gloucester, and the confiscation, by royal edict, of all his estates, which were declared forfeited to the Crown. This violent and despotic act, to which we have before alluded, is believed to have been prompted by Matilda, in a spirit of fierce hatred and revenge that has few parallels. In the first year of William's reign, says the Chronicle, Matilda obtained from her lord the grant of all Brithric Meaw's lands and honours, and she then caused the unfortunate Saxon to be seized at his manor of Hamlye and removed to Winchester, where he is said to have died in prison, and to have been privately buried.[1] The allegation alone, without strong corroborative proofs, of a crime of so dark a dye would not readily have obtained credit with posterity, but, unfortunately for the reputation of the princess who perpetrated it in the hour of triumph and prosperity, it is left too apparent, too glaring, upon the page of contemporary history to admit of a moment's doubt.[2]

[9] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Wace; Walsingham; Ypodigma; Ord. Vit.; Henry; Hume; Tyrrell.

[1] Thierry; Ang.-Nor. Chron. of Tewksbury; Leland, Coll.; Cotton MSS.; Monasticon; Doomsday Book; Hist. of Gloucester.

[2] In addition to the topographical history of the times, the record appears also in Doomsday Book, where it is mentioned that Aveling, Tewksbury, Fairford, Thornbury, Whitenhurst, and other possessions in

This daring and flagitious deed—perpetrated so soon after William's accession, the moment he felt himself firmly seated upon his throne, and well supported by his military tenures and his new police—naturally revolted or terrified the English, who had relied upon the pledges taken at his coronation, and upon his previous mild deportment towards the barons and the princes of the Anglo-Saxon line. A few of the most politic, taking the alarm, and anticipating the evils to come, threw up their offices, sold their estates, and retired to foreign lands, where, in no long time, they were joined by numbers of their less wary countrymen, stripped of all they possessed. The stern discipline of William's secret police was exceeded only by that of his army, which he had strongly reinforced, and of his great feudal vassals from whom the military chain descended, binding in a stricter grasp as it approached the lower links. The mask once thrown aside, the Conqueror, no longer affecting the moderation or the deportment of a limited monarch, prepared in good earnest to carry on the war against the people, and to retain by military policy that which he had won by the sword. Still it seemed to be his object that no one should confiscate their property, and oppress or destroy them, but himself. He expressed his anxiety to restrain the excesses of his great vassals and other subordinate authorities, as if jealous of their participation, and apprehensive that the spoils of the English as a nation would be divided too fast.

Gloucestershire, formerly belonging to Brithric the son of Algar, were granted to Matilda by the Conqueror, and, after her death reverting to the Crown, were by William again bestowed on their second son, William Rufus. Matilda, it is known, also deprived Gloucester of its charter and civic privileges, because it was the city of the unhappy Brithric, and manifested some sympathy for his fate.

While he thus gradually extended his sovereignty, and governed his nobles with a more vigorous sway than any feudal prince or chief in Europe, he appears also to have calculated upon those insurrections of an oppressed people, which would enable him to enlarge and consolidate his royal prerogatives, and hold the same unlimited sway over the people as he soon exercised over the great councils of the State. The Conquest, in this sense, so far from being the result of one battle or of a single campaign, involved a war against the superior character, power, and freedom inherent in the Anglo-Saxon monarchy and institutions, which William in vain attempted to eradicate or to subdue.[3]

It is evident, therefore, that while the new king gave the most prudent, moderate, and even humane injunctions to his prelates and nobles, it was his secret policy to encourage the disorders and rapacity of his greater followers, who, as in the case of his brother Odo, when they had amply glutted themselves with the public spoils, were deemed worthy of being themselves made the royal prey. Rulers of fertile provinces, they were destined in their turn to feel the pressure of a royal hand, not less severe than that which they inflicted upon the authorities and people beneath them; and, by a sort of feudal privilege, the political sponges were alternately filled and emptied, the last and fullest being reserved for the royal treasury itself. Had William been really desirous of repressing the violence and restraining the gross excesses of his nobles and the subordinate vassals, he could have succeeded by the same means as he had employed in Normandy, and the English would not so early, if at all, have broken out

[3] Brodie; Hallam; Mackintosh; Alison; Thierry; Henry; Lingard.

into insurrection. Had he respected their bravery, or felt for their misfortunes, instead of indulging the rancorous enmity and insatiable desire of revenge which embittered even his last moments, it is impossible that the name of Englishman should have fallen so low as soon to become a term of reproach, and that none of native birth should have been admitted to any office or authority; an exclusion second only to confiscation or exile, and which was continued for nearly a century and a half.

Yet this systematic oppression, conducted by policy, and instigated by passion, by the worst of passions—ambition, avarice, and revenge—did not prevent his granting exclusive rights and privileges similar, only in a smaller degree, to his own, in order to enrich his exchequer; but the effect of this was by degrees to create a rival democratic power, which threatened to subvert the thrones of his less politic successors. Had he not aimed at absolute sovereignty, had he not given a free license to his great vassals and their retainers, to his army when in action, and to the silent terrorism of his spies and police, it is incredible that the Normans would have dared to carry matters to such an extreme against the English, or have succeeded, after plundering them of their property, in trampling them under their feet. More than one of William's more honest adherents refused to join in the exterminating crusade, declaring that they had land enough at home, and did not wish to despoil that of other people. Or is it at all probable that, with a monarch well-disposed towards his English subjects, so attached to law and discipline, so stern and terrible in his anger, his dependents would have ventured upon those violent and illegal

measures and acts of outrage which marked their conduct in their treatment of the vanquished? On the other hand, we are assured[4] that the Normans were astonished at their own power, became as it were mad with pride, and imagined that *they might do whatever they pleased to the English*. Young ladies of the highest rank and greatest beauty, having lost their fathers, brothers, and protectors, and being violated by armed ruffians, called upon Death to come to their relief.[5] Happy those who found sanctuary, or made their escape into the convents!

Excesses and enormities like these could have had their origin only in a studied contempt, sanctioned by the monarch, for everything English; for the most sacred ties; for the exercise of honour, justice, or any virtue whatever in connection with the vanquished. No efforts appear to have been made by him to allay the jealousies of a conquered people, to lighten the yoke of his feudal aristocracy, heavy as it was, or to obtain the confidence of his new subjects, by his impartiality, his clemency or his justice. In his love of dominion and vengeance, he seemed to have forgotten the more liberal and magnanimous sentiments which actuated him in his government of Normandy. Acting in the spirit of the maxim that "to divide is to rule," he extended the same policy to his foreign relations, and, aware that the claims of the Danish kings to the sovereignty of England still existed, he left no means

[4] Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; W. Pict.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.

[5] Yet at this very time William, it is said, was granting to the citizens of London the first charter they ever possessed, "which is written in the Saxon tongue, and sealed with green wax, and expressed in eight or nine lines."—Fabyan's Chron. edited by Sir H. Ellis.

untried to create divisions in their councils; and his endeavours were successful. The Norwegians supported Magnus, the son of Olaus, while the Danes acknowledged only Canute the Third. Torn by these factions, it was not difficult for William to secure adherents among both parties in a State where public offices were put up to sale, and influence over the authorities was purchased by money. He gained over Adelbert, archbishop of Hamburg, a man of a busy intriguing spirit, who, by fomenting discord both in court and camp, not only delayed, but completely marred for a time, the grand expedition long projected against England.

Relieved from immediate apprehensions in that quarter, William cemented his alliance with other powers, especially with Anjou, France, and Germany. It was his object to prevent or appease all foreign wars,[6] until he had succeeded in establishing his new system, and consolidating his power in England. With this view he cultivated the most amicable relations with the papal See, and availed himself of its paramount influence to strengthen his connection with foreign courts. The grand question as to the right of investitures, destined so long to distract the royal councils of England, had not yet been mooted, and William, by sanctioning the collection of Peter-pence, which had given so much umbrage to the Anglo-Saxon church, artfully contrived to maintain his ascendency in the favour of the Holy See.

Compelled, also, to place himself at the head of the grand European movement which fixed the feudal instead

[6] Novis ex rebus aucti, tuta et præsentia, quam vetera et periculosa malunt.—Tacit. 1 Ann.

of the servile yoke—a mighty change auspicious to future liberty—upon the institutions of every European nation, William appeared at least to be desirous of amalgamating the two people as far as in such a state of affairs might be possible. With this view he promoted the union of English ladies of rank with his great Norman vassals. The distinction he sought to confer in the nuptials of his favourite Montgomery with the dowager duchess of Gloucester, was one only of the examples which led to the supposition,[7] that at that period he viewed the spirit of national jealousy with disapprobation and pain. He was equally anxious at the same time to adopt the language of the Anglo-Saxons, if we are to believe some of the Norman writers, in the national councils and courts of law; and it is asserted that previously to the reign of Henry III. we cannot discover a deed or law drawn or composed in French. Instead of prohibiting the English language, it was employed by the Conqueror and his successors in their charters, until the reign of Henry II.[8] There is no doubt that at the outset of his reign he obtained the reputation of a just and moderate prince; but his professions were soon too painfully contrasted with his actions to permit the national delusion to last. William, like his great barons, began to convert his feudal privileges and wardship into a source of gain. These singular rights or incidents of feudalism did not exist in England before the Conquest; they were till then peculiar to France and Normandy. Seizing the lands in wardship, and selling the heiress in marriage to the

[7] Quarterly Review, v. 34, p. 260 ; Hallam ; Alison.

[8] Quarterly Review, v. 34, p. 262, 3 ; Wilkins ; Hoveden.

highest offer, though not legal, was of frequent occurrence.[9]

The presence of Edgar Atheling and other English princes and earls never appeared to give the slightest uneasiness or umbrage to the Conqueror. Till the fatal change in his policy and counsels, he had confirmed them in their former dignities, and invariably treated the Saxon heir with the consideration due to a near relative and descendant of the pious Edward. This change was greatly to be regretted. It interfered with the union between the two people, and obstructed those intermarriages which were becoming general, and would have extended to other ranks and to the masses—a result which did not take place for nearly a century and a half afterwards. Ducarel, in his curious account of the old Norman families, gives us some interesting anecdotes respecting the intimate connection then subsisting between England and Normandy. William, in 1054, had founded a Benedictine abbey dedicated to St. Michael, and another of the same name was built soon after his arrival in England. A Cluniac priory had been erected at his request at Longueville, in Normandy, by Guiffard, subsequently Earl of Buckingham, who after the Conquest raised a counterpart to it at Longueville in England. Albemarle, a village in the Bresle, four leagues from Rouen, curtailed into Aumale, gave to a long line of French and English nobility a title which is now borne by a French prince and by an English earl. In 1063 William had consecrated the cathedral of Caen to the Holy Virgin, in presence of his queen and court,

[9] Hallam, Middle Ages, ii. 115; Smythe; Alison; Stat. of Merton, 1236; Chron. Sax.

and a large body of his lords and prelates. In England it was his ambition to found edifices of a similar character; and, by the prosecution of such plans, the interests and property of the two people would have become earlier blended, in conjunction with their habits, fashions, and amusements. Like a new graft upon some noble stem, they would soon have been absorbed and become part of the national tree. For some time mutual possessions and family connections prevailed in both countries; and it was this growing union which rendered a knowledge of the Norman history and manners so essential to a clear appreciation of those of the English. It is remarkable how this forced intercourse, in the first instance, gave rise to close resemblances of names and titles, and to near relationship in families wholly ignorant of their common descent, and who, with their collateral branches, have many a time since engaged each other in deadly wars, and shed their kindred blood in the battle-field.[1]

It has been remarked that, for some time after the Conquest, the county courts for the distribution of justice, though greatly modified by William, were still retained. They soon fell into insignificance as courts of law, but did not cease to be of importance on account of the new functions attributed to them of electing sheriffs, coroners, and knights of the shire. The observation of Hume, that the institution of county courts has had greater effects in the government than have yet been distinctly pointed out by historians or traced by antiquaries, is not without foundation. To these courts may be ascribed that mutual sympathy and community of interest between the freeholders and the great barons

[1] Ducarel, fol. ed.; Thierry; Sismondi; L'Art de Vérifier les Dates.

in their joint struggles against the Crown, so remarkable in the history of England, and so fortunate in their results to public liberty.[2]

To the same institution, at a subsequent period, we owe the formation of a representative body peculiar to this country, which long served as a connecting link between the military aristocracy and the peaceful and industrious classes of the community; and, when finally merged in the representation of the cities and boroughs it contributed to elevate the great body of the nation to that weight and importance in the State, which have been the main source of all that is excellent or admirable in our constitution.[3]

To the early modifications introduced by the Conqueror into this institution, as into so many others of Anglo-Saxon origin, with whatever interested views, we are perhaps indebted for some of those advantages, and the degree of freedom and national distinction as compared with other nations, which we now enjoy. While blaming therefore the arbitrary conduct, the ambition, avarice, and revenge, manifested during the progress of his reign, we must not be insensible to William's exalted merits as a lawgiver and a statesman, as a great ruler, capable of displaying a master-mind both in the cabinet and in the field, but the lustre of whose great qualities was dimmed and almost defaced by the darkness of his passions. In those party estimates of his character and of his conquest which have tended to confuse rather than to throw light upon the real influence exercised by William upon the laws and institutions of

[2] Edinburgh Review, v. 26; Thierry; Hallam; Alison; Sismondi; Smyth; Brodie. [3] Ibid.

the country, there have not been wanting writers to assert that he ascended the throne by the most indefeasible of all titles—conquest—and ruled, and was entitled to rule, as an absolute sovereign. He accordingly enacted laws, imposed taxes, and administered justice agreeably to his own will and pleasure, with no greater restraint from legal institutions than the present king of Denmark or the autocrat of the Russias. To such advocates the question seems never to have occurred, by what possible right could a duke of Normandy, with very limited authority in his own country, raised to the throne of England by the help of independent adventurers, feudal vassals, like himself, of the King of France, attracted to his standard by the promise of lands and honours, at once convert himself into a despotic arbiter of the lives and fortunes, not only of the conquered, but of the conquerors. Certainly not by means of the feudal system, for William was not the first to introduce its principles into England. He established, it is true, knight service, and introduced some feudal incidents till then unknown to the Saxons. Many parts of the system existed in England before his arrival. Beneficiary possessions were familiar to the Saxons. Feudal homage is repeatedly mentioned in their chronicles and charters, and even the word vassal occurs as early as the time of Alfred. Privileged jurisdictions are frequently alluded to in their laws; fines for alienations, and even escheats in certain cases were not unknown to them. Reliefs are described at length in the laws of Canute, under the name of heriots.

The feudal system was, in some degree, taking the same course in England, before the Conquest, which it pursued among the other nations of Europe, and there

seems little doubt that, though the Norman invasion had never happened, the same causes which diffused it over the continent would have established it in nearly the same forms in England.[4]

If the system had been a political arrangement contrived for the purpose of paramount arbitrary control in the Crown, how came it to be adopted by a body of high-spirited warriors, proud of their independence, and impatient even of just restraint? Does the answer of earl Warenne to the commissioners of Edward I. imply that such notions were entertained of the Conqueror in an age not far removed in time from his own? When that great baron was required to show his title to his estate, he drew his sword, observing that William the Bastard did not conquer the kingdom for himself alone, but that the barons, and his ancestor among the rest, were joint adventurers in the enterprise. And, in the last place, who ever heard of the feudal system being favourable to absolute monarchy? To a landed oligarchy it may be so indeed.[5]

But William was no common monarch. In spite of the protection of their feudal privileges, he brought the petty tyrants under his masterly sway, and was almost the sole European sovereign of his age who bridled both the prelate and the baron, and held them in complete subjection to the yoke of the Crown. In vain they pleaded and protested, asserted their seignorial rights, rose in arms, and even joined in conspiracies with the Saxon earls, the Norman malcontents with the French princes, to throw off his stern dominion, and exercise the same unbridled power as the great foreign vassals

[4] Edinburgh Review, 26, 169-79; Hume; Henry; Tyrrell; Lingard; Mackintosh; Alison; Brodie. [5] Ibid.

under weaker paramount rule. They had not even the satisfaction of retaliating in full upon their subordinate vassals; for the comparatively free institutions of the English, upheld by William as far as he found them to be consistent with his sovereign aggrandisement, and strengthened by the strict discipline of the royal army and the police, opposed a barrier to their excesses and their absolute will. Some of them, in their discontent, followed the example of the self-exiled English lords, and retired to their estates in Normandy, leaving William to fill up their places with more loyal adherents,[6] to add to the number of his great vassals, and thus to swell the amount of his royal rent-roll—his grand and almost sole object after his accession to the English crown. Even here Fortune smiled upon his efforts. Instead of dissipating his resources, or submitting to solicit or enforce extraordinary aid, he offered a rare exception to the improvidence of contemporary sovereigns, and to the mean expedients and neediness of so many of his successors. He grasped boldly, confiscated largely, and put up his crown lands to the highest bidders; but this he did at the expense of the great lords who had offended him, not of the people who by such a summary process were often relieved from despotic and grinding extortioners, and became at least serfs and vassals of the Crown.[7]

[6] It was this indignation at the restriction of their feudal power in England which induced some of them to declare that they would no longer join in robbing and despoiling the English, for they had land enough to cultivate at home. Roger de Beaumont, and a few others, declined to follow the expedition at all.

[7] In one sense the popular character of William's government was shown by the number of courts and parliaments held during his reign. King William I., in the sixth year of his reign, held his court at Win-

In conformity with his views of checking the unbridled power and spoliations of his barons, William early adopted measures to raise up the antagonist influence of corporate bodies, which he clearly saw could not fail to replenish his exchequer to an equal or greater extent than his vassals of the soil. He confirmed the existing privileges of the city of London, and those of the principal towns throughout the kingdom. In regard to the nature of these privileges, if we may believe contemporary writers, they contained within them the germs of popular power, and established a sort of graduated scale of civil liberty, by which the slow rise from

chester, at the feast of Easter. There the great cause between Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas, archbishop of York, concerning the primacy, was first entered upon. At the Whitsuntide following, the king held his court at Windsor; and there that cause was determined in the presence of the king, and of divers bishops and others. [*Ex Autogr. in Archivo Ecclesiæ Christi Cantuar.* The tenor of this instrument may be also seen in *Malm. Hist.*, l. iii. p. 117.] In the nineteenth year of his reign, at Christmas, he held his court at Gloucester, at Easter at Winchester, at Whitsuntide at London or Westminster; and knighted his son Henry, and took homage of all the land-holders of England, to whose fee soever they belonged, and afterwards fealty; and then, having levied great sums of money upon such of his subjects as were really or colourably obnoxious, he went into Normandy. [*Rudborn, Hist. Winton apud Angl. Sax.*, t. i. p. 258.] In or about the year 1085, at Christmas, he held his court (with his nobles) [*Chron. Sax. Œ. Gibson, ad* A.D. 1085] at Gloucester, where he gave bishoprics to three of his chaplains, viz., to Maurice that of London, to William that of Thetford, to Robert that of Chester. In the next year, he commanded the prelates, barons, and sheriffs, with their knights, to meet him at Salisbury, and there he took an oath of fealty of their knights. [*Hoved.*, P. I. 460, n. 20, 30.] He was a very magnificent prince, and wore his crown three times a year, when he was in England; at Easter he wore it at Winchester, at Whitsuntide at Westminster, and at Christmas at Gloucester. And at those times there used to be with him all the great men of England; archbishops and bishops, abbots and earls, theines and knights. [*Chron Sax.* p. 190, *ad ann.* 1086.]—Madox, History of the Exchequer.

serfdom may be said to have been first ensured. This, however, was pre-eminently the work of Christianity,[8] at the period of the introduction of which into England no people was more deeply imbruted in the revolting horrors of idolatry, slavery, ignorance, and superstition. How strong must the servile spirit, the peculiar stain and reproach of paganism, have been, when even in the national contract of Magna Charta, where the privileges of the barons and the freemen were so anxiously provided for, no stipulation of any importance was made for the extensive class of husbandmen and slaves![9] For these, the Conquest and the subsequent extension of the feudal tenures laid the foundation of future emancipation; and the free classes of English yeomanry, citizens, and civilians, received fresh importance, and were recruited from the ranks of those fair-haired Saxon slaves who had once been publicly exposed for sale at Rome.

The brilliant and imposing court, which William soon afterwards displayed, gave to his first popular measures a fresh but illusory charm. They were received as an earnest, we are told, of the enlightened and impartial policy of his future government. And it was natural that a delusion so agreeable should be readily cherished, whether we regard the splendour of the new monarch's military regulations, the vast results of such a victory,

[8] A singular anecdote relating to this memorable event has been recorded. An embassy of British idolaters, before proceeding to meet Augustine, the Papal envoy, consulted a neighbouring hermit upon the subject. "If on your arrival," he said, "Augustine rises to salute you, he is a messenger from God; but if he do not, he is proud, and have no more to do with him." "Verily," adds the writer, "this ancient recluse was no fool."—Vest. Ang. i. 97; Sir J. Mackintosh. It is pleasing to reflect that the fair sex had the merit of introducing Christianity into the most considerable kingdoms of the heptarchy.—Ibid.

[9] Alison, i. 44.

an event so memorable, and a revolution so complete, all was calculated to impress the imagination and awe the mind; and we cannot wonder that the English at first turned their eyes to the brighter side of the picture, too happy in applauding the politic clemency and justice which had too short a date. The completion of the chain of fortresses with which he drew round the vanquished an iron cordon, serving both for exterior and internal defence; his dismissal of Englishmen from their offices, his placing the command of the castles and the government of towns and districts in the hands of the Normans, and his confiscation of the lands of the Earl of Gloucester and other noblemen, dispelled their agreeable presages with a rude hand. The restoration, likewise, of the Anglo-Saxon fortresses,[1] comparatively neglected, with the rapid construction of camps and barracks, in stations selected to overawe the chief towns, gradually opened the eyes of the people to the real nature of William's designs. It annoyed them to reflect that they were subjected to Frenchmen, for so the Normans were designated, and the latter were themselves prouder of that distinction than of their fraternity with a greater people. They were called so likewise in the laws of William, and in the charters of that prince

[1] The Normans, magnificent as they were, seem at first to have entered this country with ideas of fortification quite different from and inferior to those of the Saxons; though they afterwards adopted the latter, and even greatly improved upon them. Their first castles and their first style of architecture are almost everywhere to be distinguished. Descended from the Danes, they still retained Danish ideas, and considered the high mount as the most essential part of the fortress. As therefore the high insulated hill is characteristic of almost every Danish camp, so the same kind of hill, as the basis of a round tower, is characteristic of all the first Norman castles.—Archæologia, vol. vi. 237; Stowe's Annals; Vestigia Ang.

and of his successors for a century after the Conquest. By adoption at least they were in all things French.[2]

From this epoch the old Saxon aristocracy and serfdom were slowly superseded by the graduated scale of feudal tenures, and its concentrating, exclusive, and class laws, which struck their roots vigorously into the English soil. All the important points from which danger was apprehended were compelled to receive garrisons; nor was the rigid discipline introduced by the Conqueror into his military and police establishments less vigorously enforced with regard to the civil administration of the country. Before March, 1067, and within six months after his landing, William had succeeded in planting his power firmly upon the institutions of the people; in laying the foundation of a new system of government, the introduction, or rather extension, of feudal tenures; and in smoothing the way, as he hoped, for the adoption of the Norman laws, usages, and language.[3] Peace and order, under the dark shadow of his severe military rule, were apparently restored throughout the length and breadth of the land.

But the Conquest had not yet given rise to the establishment of the feudal system in all its rigours. Nor had the Pope succeeded in extending his temporal supremacy in this remote island, as it was then considered, in the manner which was subsequently attempted both in William's reign and in that of his successors. Still, in England as in the rest of Europe, the feudal

[2] Seldeni Spicelegia ad Edmerium, 196; Charta Henrici II. in libro rubro Scaccarii; Henry, Hist. of Brit. iii. 554.

[3] We are nevertheless told of a very praiseworthy effort upon the part of William, similar to that of the elder Cato with the Greek; namely, that he endeavoured in advanced life *to learn English*, the better to administer justice; but failed on account of his age.—Ord. Vit. 520.

system and the papal power were making rapid strides, though in the former country they were attended with some fortunate peculiarities, some advantages to counterbalance their evils—evils which in other States proved such serious impediments to the improvement of human happiness.[4]

Early in his reign, about the same period, William is stated to have followed the example of Canute the Great, by re-enacting and confirming the statutes of his predecessors; and we must consider the laws which are extant under his name as closing the series of monuments of Anglo-Saxon legislation.[5] How these were subsequently evaded and became a mere dead letter is shown by the best contemporary authorities. But the people now with one accord repeatedly demanded the restoration of the laws and customs known and used by them, such as had prevailed, they declared, in the days of holy king Edward the Confessor. With these requisitions, William, like his successors, ostensibly complied; and a statute or capitulary, purporting to contain the laws and customs which king William granted to the people of England[6] after the Conquest, being the same which king Edward his cousin maintained before him, has been preserved in Romance and in Latin. Both texts agree so closely as to show that the one is a translation of the other. The Latin text is yet extant in manuscript. The Romance or French text, which was published by Selden, with a Latin version, and afterwards by Lambard and Wilkins, from the history ascribed to Ingulphus, has long enjoyed the reputation of being the original. If so, the code would be indeed a testi-

[4] Smythe, Lec. v. 116-17. [5] Quarterly Review, vol. xxxiv. 260.
[6] Ibid.

mony both of English liberty and English servitude; for, whilst it proves that William respected the Saxon laws, it affords evidence of the plan which he is said to have formed for the extirpation of the English tongue.[7]

Early in the same year, the Conqueror became desirous of revisiting Normandy. He was naturally anxious to rejoin his consort, to whom he was ardently attached, as well as to display to the eyes of his Norman court and vassals the wealth and splendour of the spoils of England, and to enjoy the fame of his mighty conquest.[8] In the appointment of his council of Regency and governors during his absence, he exhibited the profound policy by which his conduct was invariably distinguished. While he left agents of a character liable to goad the English into insurrection, he was careful to provide against all danger by taking with him the most influential of the Saxon nobility, including Edgar Atheling. He also received the homage of his great vassals and other Norman subjects, previously to setting out; made a progress through different counties; and confirmed the two earls Edwin and Morcar, earl Coxo, lord Edric, surnamed the Forester, and others, in possession of their honours and estates. In many places he received at public assemblies the fealty of different classes of his subjects, through deputations and the heads of corporate bodies whose privileges he had confirmed, conducting himself towards them "with the most engaging affability."[9] He assured them that he

[7] Quarterly Review, xxxiv. 261; Lingard; Henry; Mackintosh; Hallam; Brodie; Alison; Smythe.

[8] Henry; Kennet; Hume; W. Pict.; Ord. Vit.; Chron. Sax.

[9] W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; S. Dunelm; Walsingham; Ypodigma.

had been at great pains to restrain his followers from abusing his power or inflicting either injuries or insults on his English subjects.

It is difficult to reconcile these popular professions with the measures he adopted subsequently to the English outbreaks; and by many writers his motives in regard to revisiting Normandy at this period have been considered strange and unaccountable. But if we reflect that his newly-acquired power was not yet fully consolidated; that, by fresh confiscations, the fruits of insurrection, he might extend his prerogatives, and perhaps achieve the absolute sovereignty at which he aimed; his conduct will be found consistent with the policy he had uniformly pursued. Fatal as was the battle of Hastings, it had not left him undisputed master of the kingdom. The English submitted only upon conditions; and, as he had assumed the crown, he was still compelled to reign in the character of a constitutional sovereign; to summon the usual councils and county assemblies; and, in point of forms, to respect the laws, liberties, and usages of the Anglo-Saxons—a government which, however imperfect, was at variance with the spirit of unqualified feudal despotism predominant in France and Normandy. Hence William's hesitation to accept the crown, offered upon such conditions: he trusted to attain by policy what it was dangerous to avow and enforce—the paramount feudal sovereignty exercised by his ancestors. A profound master of dissimulation, he resolved to proceed step by step; to excite revolts by the rapacity and oppressions of his governors, and, by extending the bounds of confiscation, gradually to absorb the entire political power, and, with the help of his great barons and prelates, the property

of his English subjects. With such views, he selected as his regents the most rapacious and ruthless of his Normans; and, if other proofs of this deep-laid project were wanting, the key to unlock his secret motives is to be found in the use he afterwards made of the services of men compelled to yield up to their employer the treasures of which they had despoiled the people. These were bishop Odo, his half-brother, and Fitzosborne, both equally cruel and overbearing; who, when the work assigned to them was completed, were, under different pretexts, deprived of their liberty and their estates. They obtained the name of "the Conqueror's sponges;" but the deluded people, laying the blame upon *their* special misgovernment, attributed their punishment to the king's regard for justice rather than to his tyranny and insatiable rapacity. The self-exile of the English nobles, and the forfeiture of their estates, were only the forerunners of the Norman proscription, of the death of the Earl of Northumberland, and the revolt of Fitzosborne and other leaders. Yet, with consummate art, William reconciled this virtual tyranny with an apparently respectful observance of existing laws. Nor was there a measure of severity or confiscation which he did not regularly submit to the discussion of his great councils, in which his ministerial power was all but supreme.

Having completed his arrangements, the Conqueror embarked where he had first landed, at Pevensey, towards the end of March, 1067.[1] He was escorted by a gallant squadron, attended by a splendid train of nobles of both countries, and a vast collection of the spoils of

[1] Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.

the vanquished, to excite the admiration and please the fancy of the queen and her Norman court.[2] The retinue he had selected was well adapted to impress his favourite Normans with ideas of English wealth and power, and, by the studied display of the Anglo-Saxon princes and earls at his chariot wheels, to raise a still higher opinion of his resistless energies, talents, and success. It is a proof of his unerring penetration that they were the very men whom he had most reason to dread, and who, had he left them at home to head the people in his absence, might have converted a premeditated revolt for politic purposes into a new revolution. They were precisely those from whom he experienced the most uneasiness, and who ultimately rose in arms against him; Edgar Atheling, Stigand the archbishop, the brother earls Edwin and Morcar, and all their adherents. To give lustre to his mighty triumph,[3] he treated his tall and handsome prisoners, for such they really were, with extraordinary deference and respect. He introduced them to his queen and the ladies of her court, who concealed not their admiration of their manly beauty, their piercing blue eyes, fair hair, and brilliant complexion.[4] Though really brought "to swell the triumph and partake the gale" of William's fortunes, their merit and accomplishments soon attracted general admiration, not unaccompanied, in many instances, with sentiments of a warmer nature. The ladies, who had been so long

[2] Chron. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.

[3] W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; S. Dunelm; Walsingham; Ypodigma.

[4] In this admiration the Norman beauties of Queen Matilda's court seem to have agreed with the great historian Tacitus, who, in his description of the Saxons, by no means omitted those graces which struck their fancy.

deserted by their lovers and husbands, had now an opportunity of expressing their feelings, and avenging themselves for past neglects by more than vain reproaches; and not a few transferred the pangs of jealousy from their own breasts to those of their too careless lords.

Then, the quantity of gold and silver plate, of the most elegant and exquisite workmanship, for which the English were already famous; the profusion and splendour of the fabrics; the magnificence of the Saxon nobles, and of the king's officers and body-guards, surpassed everything of the kind before seen. The queen's love of ostentation, encouraged by the pride and politic motives of her consort, appeared to greater advantage by the contrast of this extraordinary union of the beauty and chivalry of the two nations; and the series of brilliant festivals which followed, drew also to the Norman court immense numbers of the higher ranks from the surrounding states.

The affable, yet dignified deportment of William, and the fascinating manners and brilliant accomplishments of his queen, filled even their illustrious guests with admiration and delight. This was the true way, if consistently adhered to, of softening down national asperities. The same festivities were repeated at Caen, at Fécamp, at Falaise, and at Rouen, after which the king and queen proceeded in a sort of triumphal progress, surrounded by English and Norman suites,[5] through the chief towns and cities of their states.

The ceremonies of their receiving fealty from the citizens and neighbouring vassals were conducted on this occasion with much regal pomp, carried to a still

[5] Chron. de Nor.; Hist. de Nor.; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.

higher pitch by the obsequious deportment of Philip, King of France. Philip had despatched his uncle Rodolph, at the head of a noble embassy, to congratulate the new monarch, whose failure he had so confidently predicted, not as his English vassal, but as a brother and an equal, who had successfully forced his way within the verge of "that divinity which doth hedge a king."

The Conqueror entertained the French nobles with extraordinary magnificence, and returned with them in the same royal state to his Norman capital, whither his fair consort, attended by Roger de Beaumont,[6] and other members of the Regency, had repaired to welcome them. The enthusiastic plaudits of the people must have sounded harshly in the ears of the English nobles, thus painfully reminded of the influence and power of the Conqueror. They must have felt diminished confidence in the efforts of their countrymen to throw off a yoke so galling, so oppressive, and so humiliating to a great people.

The archiepiscopal see of Rouen, becoming vacant about this period by the death of Maurille, was offered by William to the celebrated Lanfranc, and, on his declining it, was conferred upon John, bishop of Avranches. But before William had time to adopt any measures of importance with regard to a more intimate connection between the two countries, and to recruit his Norman troops in England, his attention was recalled from courtly festivities and family enjoyments to the field of action, by no very unexpected news from Eng-

[6] This noble, called Roger le Barbu, for not adopting the new Norman fashion, had preferred to remain at home, and sent his son on the expedition. He was president of the Norman council, and united with Matilda in the regency; rumour scrupled not to say in a more tender union, but without any apparent authority.

land.[7] The illegal acts of the subordinate authorities under the Crown, and other vassals,[8] with the pride and tyranny of the new governors, had goaded on the people from murmurs and complaints into open revolt; and no conciliatory measures had been resorted to by the Regency.

The Kentish men, yet mindful of their once free and happy state, were joined by Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, and made an attempt to surprise the town and castle of Dover.[9] Edric the Forester rose upon the Norman captains in Herefordshire;[1] and earl Coxo was soon afterwards put to death by his own followers, for persisting in his submission to the new government. The English on all sides were preparing for revolt; the Normans who fell into their hands were put to death, and the renewal of a general massacre, as on former occasions with regard to the Danes, was the subject of secret discussion.[2] The presence of William was imperatively called for by the oppressors who had conjured up but could not allay the storm; and, having appointed his son Robert and his consort joint regents, he set sail from Dieppe on the sixth of December, and landed on the seventh[3] at Winchelsea. Hence he hastened to London, and by thus appearing so unexpectedly, awed the malcontents, and confirmed the wavering, and, affecting the utmost calmness and affability, held his royal Christmas as was customary. The mere report of his arrival threw discord and contention into the ranks of the disaffected; and complete tranquillity, or rather the

[7] Hist. de Nor.; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Vie de Guillaume.

[8] Many in the reign of William held by a *mesne* tenure small freeholds and parcels of manors.—Hume; Lingard; Hallam, ii. 162; Alison; Smythe.

[9] Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; Walsingham.

[2] W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Ord. Vit.

[1] Hoveden, Annal. 258.

[3] Ord. Vit. 509.

silence of a sudden truce, was restored. It was destined, however, to be as speedily broken;[4] the extreme calmness and affability of William were deceitful, and only foreboded the tempest.

Early in the succeeding year, 1068, the revolts were renewed; but William was not taken unawares, nor was he suddenly provoked into acts of injustice. He proceeded upon system; he even restored some estates which had been wrested from the English during his absence; while he enforced with increased diligence the strictness of his military discipline and of his police.[5]

Among other regulations, it has been asserted that William introduced that of the *couvre-feu;* and that it was now for the first time in England that

"The curfew toll'd the knell of parting day;"

but it is well known that the same custom was observed in France, Spain, and other European countries, and that it was no novelty to the Anglo-Saxons themselves.[6]

[4] Ord. Vit. 509.

[5] It was not, however, so efficient as that established by king Alfred in the hundreds and tithings, which united the benefit of complete protection with the principle of self-government, opposed alike to feudal and despotic oppression. Like Alfred, the Norman punished every kind of malversation in his officers, and not a few of the most notorious for bribery and corruption exchanged places with the prisoners, were tried, and put to death.—Miroir des Justices; Vestigia Anglicana.

[6] The police act, as relating to the article of the *couvre-feu,* was, "1. At the hour of seven, at the sound of bell, all citizens and villagers to put out fire and candle; not to leave their own dwellings on pain of death; for the better suppression of assassinations and seditions." This admirable instrument of a despotic government is stated to have originated with the Council of Caen, and to have been adopted on account of the insurrections of the barons, though it fell with double punishment upon the people. It was emphatically termed "*God's peace,*" and formed part of William's edict for the suppression of brawls and murders throughout his dominions. The curfew is still tolled in some districts of Nor-

It was the same with the odious and oppressive tax of the Danegelt, revived to replenish the royal treasury, considerably exhausted by the vast sums expended during the visit to Normandy, such as not even the expected confiscations were sufficient to supply. The embers of revolt were still smouldering, and the arbitrary conduct of the barons at length fanned them into open flame. The English could ill brook so galling a bondage as the curfew,[7] enforced under such penalties, and still less the renewal of the Danish tax; a lasting memorial of their humiliation and their misery. This last was exacted also in direct violation of a law of Edward, which the Conqueror had sworn scrupulously to respect. And thus the confidence reposed in him for his first apparent efforts to administer impartial justice was for ever destroyed. Though levied in the southern districts, it was found impracticable to raise the tax in Northumberland; nor were William's new edicts much better obeyed in other parts of the country.[8] The people of Exeter, at the instigation of Harold's mother, Githa, seized the fortress, and invoked the adjacent country to rise and join in the revolt. The Conqueror hastened to the scene of danger, and, after a siege of eighteen days,

mandy, where it is called *La Retraite.*—Ord. Vit.; Cassan; Polydore Virgil; Ducarel.

[7] The curfew was generally used also as a precaution against fire. The tenements were then built almost wholly of wood. But as so much obloquy early attached to the *couvre-feu*, it was doubtless the severe method of enforcing the custom, and at an earlier hour than was usual among the Saxons, which gave so much offence.

[8] William, at this period, and for some time afterwards, affected to base all his proceedings upon legal and established foundations. This was the cause that, in the projected wreck of the English liberties, some vestiges of the ancient usages and constitution still remained.—Mackintosh; Hallam; Alison; Lingard; Brodie; Smythe.

compelled the insurgents to submit and implore his mercy; while Githa, with all her treasures—a prize he would willingly have secured—escaped into Flanders.[9]

William next marched into Cornwall, and, having suppressed the last symptoms of revolt, returned to Winchester to hold the Easter festival with his royal consort, who had arrived from Normandy. Their joint coronation, as William had promised, on a more splendid scale, was celebrated in the abbey of Westminster,[1] on Whitsunday in the year 1068. In the same year the queen was delivered of a fourth son, who was baptised by the name of Henry, and who afterwards ascended the English throne.

The following months, spent alternately at Berkhampstead, at Windsor, or in the New Forest, were perhaps among the few most tranquil and free from anxiety of any in this king's active and stormy career. Happy in a consort devotedly attached to him, and in his young family, both destined to cause him so much misery at no distant period, and successful in all the objects of his government, he had now time to mature those ulterior measures which he had so long contemplated. He had reaped the fruits of insurrection and added to his power; he was ambitious of becoming a lawgiver as well as a practical despot; and he prepared a new code, of which the feudal and military tenures, with the addition of the Norman usages and language, were to form the basis. This mixed code, as the groundwork of our liberties, is extremely curious and interesting, well deserving the ample and laborious

[9] Ord. Vit. 510; Chron. Sax. A.D. 1068.

[1] We omit the details, which are very fully and pleasingly dwelt upon by Miss Strickland, in her amusing "Lives of the Queens of England."

discussion of so many able writers, and of almost all our legal and other journals up to the present day. The grand division of the inhabitants of England was into freemen and slaves. But there were many bodies of men named in the Saxon laws and in Doomsday Book, whom it is somewhat difficult to arrange in either class; they are the Bordars, Cottars, &c. It is the opinion of a most ingenious person that the Ceorles[2] were slaves. A profound investigator of Saxon antiquities, with much more likelihood, believes that the villeins of the Saxons were not, as in later times, slaves, but cultivators of the soil; an opinion which had long ago been embraced by Mr. Burke.[3]

It is known that during the reign of William, the *commune concilium* was held *ex more* at the fixed court festivals of Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas. If any national concern was discussed in that assembly, it was on these occasions. There is, however, hardly any account of the proceedings, unless sometimes on ecclesiastical affairs.[4]

When the monkish historians inform us that the council was held, they seldom add more than a short sentence stating the business for which it met and the result of its deliberations. But from this negative evidence—from the brevity of historians and the loss of records—it would be wrong to conclude that no discussions took place in those assemblies except on church affairs, and that in other matters the will of the king was the supreme law which no one ventured to oppose.

[2] Churls.—Sir J. Mackintosh; Brodie; Alison; Hallam.

[3] This view is also maintained by a deep-read and well-informed lawyer. See Heywood's Ranks among the Ang. Sax. 292-294; Sir J. Mackintosh, Hist. of Eng. i. 76, 7.

[4] Histor. Reflections by Mr. Jopp, &c.

There is sufficient authority for supposing that such was not the fact.[5] The discussion of the affairs of the kingdom is emphatically alluded to, and the course of business is described. In one of the councils of William we have left us a special account of some proceedings of great moment, in which there was a difference of opinion between the king and the other members of the council, and where, after much deliberation, he was graciously pleased to yield to the wishes of his people and the prayers of his baronage. In the preamble to the laws, ascribed to Edward the Confessor, we are told that the Conqueror, in the fourth year of his reign, by the advice of his barons, appointed twelve noble, wise, and learned Englishmen to be chosen by every county in England; and directed them to appear before himself and council, and there declare on oath what were the ancient laws and customs of their country, suppressing nothing, adding nothing, altering nothing. When those commissioners had made their report, the king was inclined to prefer the Danish law to the Saxon, because it was more analogous to the law of Normandy. The commissioners entreated that they might be permitted to preserve the laws of their forefathers, in which they had been educated. The king at first refused, but, after a protracted debate, at the express instance of his barons, he acquiesced in their demand.[6]

With regard to the separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction, we can have no better authority than the Conqueror's own words. In a proclamation to the sheriffs and freeholders of Essex, Hertfordshire,

[5] Hist. Reflections, &c. by Mr. Jopp; Florence of Worcester; Eadmer; Lingard; Henry; Mackintosh; Edin. Review; Alison; Smythe.]

[6] Wilkins, 197-207; Edin. Review, vol. xxvi. *passim*.

and Middlesex, he expressly says that, finding the episcopal laws of England neither good in themselves nor consistent with the sacred canons, he had them amended by the advice of his common council, the council of his archbishops, his other bishops and abbots, and all the chief men of his kingdom. He goes on to say, "and I therefore, in virtue of my royal authority, command and direct that no bishop or archdeacon shall any more treat of the episcopal laws in meetings of the hundred."[7]

Knight's service was in a similar manner imposed by the common council of the kingdom. Among the laws ascribed to the Conqueror, there are two that relate to the due performance of this service; and both of these state, in the most direct terms, that knight's fees were granted in hereditary right, with certain services annexed to them "by the common council of our whole kingdom." Modern authors are too apt to consider the introduction of knight's service as an intolerable imposition. They forget that, before the Conquest, all lands were subjected to the *trinoda necessitas*, one part of which consisted in the obligation of military service. Knight's service was the introduction of a more fixed and certain service for one that was less certain and more indefinite. They forget also that the lands of the Saxons were in many cases held on lives or by a still more precarious tenure; and that knight's fees were granted in perpetuity. The particular year when military tenures were made universal over England is more a matter of curiosity than of importance.[8] The opinion of Sir William Blackstone is the most probable, that

[7] In the Latin language, from which we have translated it. Wilkins, 292; L. L. Gulielm. Conq. 55, 58, ap. Wilkins.

[8] Ibid.

they were gradually established by the Norman barons and others in such forfeited lands as they received from the gift of the Conqueror, and afterwards consented to by the great council of the nation long after his title was established. And the conjecture of the same learned judge, that the era of formally introducing those tenures was the great council of Sarum in 1085 or 1086, has many circumstances in its favour.[9] With the view therefore of amalgamating the different Codes, William had the Norman, West-Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Mercian Code collected and examined; and finding at the least thirty-six counties throughout England subject to the last of these, he altered and reformed some, and engrafted upon others the Norman, particularly as regarded their jurisdiction and that of the exchequer.[1] He further enacted that all the pleadings, edicts, and laws, should be written in French, an ordinance said to have obtained till 1301, when, in the reign of Edward I., an act was passed by the English parliament that it should be superseded by the Latin and English languages.[2] It is well known that, up to the Conquest, the descent of lands was to all the sons, and, as far as it appears, to all the daughters alike. There was no difference also in the hereditary transmission of lands and goods, at least in reference to the children. This is clear from the laws of king Edward, confirmed by the Conqueror; and it was to replace this subdivision by the accumulation or monopoly of property to which he directed his most strenuous efforts; to destroy

[9] See Edin. Review, vol. 26; ib.; Seldeni ad Eadmer, not. et Spiceleg.

[1] *L'Echequier*, a regular court, the authority of which William was the first of the Norman monarchs to extend and establish.

[2] Ord. Vit.; J. Brompt. Col.

the spirit, and reverse the character of the popular laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and to perpetuate the feudal system by means of property, when its forms and services should cease. In laying the groundwork of this vast and complicated scheme, by dint of Norman law and royal prerogative, William perfectly succeeded. His lavish charters and grants, and sales of exclusive privileges of every kind—continually re-seized and re-sold—favoured the growth of trade and commerce only in certain channels, which benefited the few and gradually raised up a system of exclusive classes. Having in addition to the demesnes of the Crown obtained possession of the forfeited lands, he farmed them out to his Norman adherents, reserving certain honorary tenures,[3] either by baronage, or in knight-service, or serjeantcy, for the defence of the kingdom. By the changes he thus introduced, the eldest sons began to succeed to the whole of the lands in all military tenures, and the feudal constitution, as distinct from the popular, was established in England upon the basis of class property obtained by purchase from the Crown.[4] William possessing the greatest property, the royal will was consequently predominant in the general council, which easily gave its sanction to the introduction of the new tenures, as it had done to the additional laws which he promulgated.[5] He thus prevailed, even without the people's consent, in assimilating the laws and customs of the two

[3] Wright's Tenures, and Sulliv. Lect.; Hale, Common Law of England, p. 253; Lambard; Selden; Eadmerus De Intestatorum Bonis, p. 154. [4] Wright's Tenures; Blackstone, Com. ii. 215.

[5] Selden, notes on Eadmerus, 191. The author of the Prologue to the Grand Custumier thinks it more probable that the laws of Normandy were derived from England than that ours were derived from thence. —Sir J. Hall, 129.

countries, the more readily effected by their intimate and increasing intercourse. They soon became mingled, not only in marriages and in families, but in the Church, in the State, in the court, and in councils. There was a correspondence between the special and general councils, or parliaments of both nations, by means of which Normandy gradually merged into the nobler dominion of England, and received a greater conformity of its laws to the English than it gave to them.[6]

Whether aware or not of this result, it is certain that the Conqueror at this time used all his art and industry to incorporate his realms into one dominion; and, to accomplish it the more effectually, he promoted the emigration of English families into Normandy, as well as of the Normans into England; he held his courts and festivals in both countries; and, while he ruled himself, arranged so that his queen and eldest son should often reside and exercise a regency in Normandy. This, too, he accomplished without any imposition of laws as a conqueror,[7] but upon the assumption of constitutional grounds, in the spirit of the laws of Alfred, Edgar, and Edward the Confessor, under the sanction both of the great and the common councils of the kingdom.[8] Even the shadow of a great constitutional monarchy, like England, soon extended its superiority over a small feudal duchy,[9] increased by mutual communication and a continued intercourse of trade and commerce. We have also the authority of Sir Edward

[6] Sir J. Hall.

[7] Hale, C. L. 128; Lambard; Wilkins; Edin. Review; Quarterly Review.

[8] Selden, Notes on Eadmerus; Mazeres.

[9] Precepts were issued in Normandy to summon persons there to answer in causes in England; even for lands and possessions in the former·—Hale.

Coke, of Selden, N. Bacon, Sir William Temple, Saltern, and the author of the Mirror, to show that William, however he might modify, by no means originated the feudal or other laws, especially the tenure by knight-service, which was of great antiquity, and so considered in the time of king Alfred.[1] Socage service, as appears from Doomsday Book, under the head of Churches (Worcester), was long in use before the Conquest; while William had the signal merit of rendering the possessions of bishops and abbots subject to knight-service, which took place in the fourth year of his reign.[2] In treating of the dignity of an earl, and demonstrating that such service was both feudal and inheritable from the first arrival of the Saxons in England, William of Malmsbury calls it *Commissum*, and afterwards *Commendatum*, words which suggest rather a trust than a feud.[3] The names of Thane and Vavasor in the Saxon times afford the same evidence; earl, king's thane, and middle thane succeeded each other in their laws; and so count, baron, and vavasor are used as interpreters of them in the French laws of William I. The king's thanes held of the king in chief by knight-service, and were of the same character as the subsequent honorary or parliamentary barons. A vavasor, in the origin of feudalism, was only a tenant by knight-service, who held of a mesne lord,[4] or of the king simply, as of an honour or manor, and not in chief. Bacon is of opinion that there is no proof of the Normans having changed the tenures of lands; none appeared to be of Norman

[1] Hale; Coke, 1 Inst. 76, b, id. 64, 83.

[2] Bishop Gibson; Spelman; Hale.

[3] W. of Malms.; De Gest. Reg. f. 44, 46; Spelm. Posthum. Treat. of Feuds, 13.

[4] Titles of Honour, 513, 520.

origin, though their names were in that dialect.[5] Temple maintains that King William neither broke nor changed the laws of England; that he introduced no Norman laws; that even the duty of escuage existed previously, and, like all the feudal laws, was brought into Europe by the Goths, who settled in the provinces of the Roman empire, by the Saxons in England, by the Franks in Gaul, and by the Northmen in Normandy.[6] The learned Saltern contends for the existence of conveyances by feoffment and livery before the Conquest, and of the feudal distinctions as remote as the days of Gorbonian the Good; and for fealty as sworn to the prince, in the time of Elidurus,[7] with its usual tenures, services, and distresses. The author of the Mirror declares that tenures were ordained by the Anglo-Saxon kings for the defence of the realm.[8]

On the other side, we may adduce the authority of Sommer, Spelman, Crag, M. Paris, Camden, Hody Wright, and a host of our modern luminaries of history, who refer the original of feuds in England for the most part to the Norman Conquest. Sommer observes that we owe to the Conqueror the names and customs of our English fees, or tenures,[9] such at least as are military. M. Paris is still more decided; and Camden asserts that the English were dispossessed of their estates by William, and the lands divided among his soldiers, with the reservation that he should continue direct proprietor, or lord paramount, permitting them only to be held by his mesne lords in fee. Dr. Hody observes that "baronies

[5] Hist. of the Eng. Gov. 161. [6] Temp. In. of Hist. of Eng. 171, 2.
[7] Saltern de Antiquit. Britan. Legibus. c. 8.
[8] Mirror, c. 1, sect. 3, 11, 12.
[9] Littleton's Tenures; Treat. of Gov. 100-104.

and such like tenures were first brought into England by the Conqueror."[1] Bracton is of the same opinion; and Sir Martin Wright says that William I., in the twentieth year of his reign, summoned all the great men and landowners to do homage and swear fealty to him; inferring that this was done in consequence of something new, or that these feudal engagements would have been required long before; and if so, that it is probable that feudal tenures were then new.[2] Hume, and most of the English historians, in contra-distinction to Norman writers, are of opinion that they were introduced by the Conqueror.[3] There can be little doubt that an impartial inquiry would establish the correctness of the views we have already taken; that the historical truth lies pretty nearly between the two extremes; and that William in part introduced and mainly developed, carrying into their full details, those elements of the feudal power only partially adopted before, because in great measure at variance with the laws and institutions of the Anglo-Saxons; that William, moreover, imposed the feudal law as he found it established in France and Normandy, with all its benefits and its evils; its germs of constitutional freedom, and its fatal tendencies towards corruption, monopoly, and class distinctions; its vast and concentrated power, and masses of wealth, qualified with just sufficient taste of freedom to develop the energies of a great insular people. It is in this just medium between the extreme opposite opinions that the truth may with most probability be found; as we find the feudal

[1] Hist. of Convoc. 117; Bracton, ii. c. 16, sect. 7.

[2] Dugd. Orig. Jurid. 6; Wilkins; Leg. Anglo-Saxon. f. 288-9; Cottoni Posthuma, 13, 14, 346.

[3] Hist. of Eng.; Blackstone; Barrington; Sullivan.

system itself, with its splendid attractions and advantages, weighed against its accumulated tyranny, to be the foundation, for a long period, at once of the stability and of the disorders prevailing in most of the monarchical governments of Europe.[4]

[4] Selden, Præf. ad Eadmer, f. 5 ; Madox, Hist. of the Exchequer, f. 6, in marg. ; Henry of Hunt. inter script. post Bedam, 908 ; Hoveden, 460 ; Waverley Annals, 1084, 1086.

CHAPTER VI.

Influence of William's measures—Independent legislation—Disregard of papal threats—The "common council"—Separation of the civil and ecclesiastical courts—Extension of crown pleas—Constitutional proceedings of the king—A constitutional sovereign—Unexpected results of that acknowledgment—Spirit of free laws—William's caution—Affected moderation—Observance of legal forms—Ecclesiastical changes—"General council" held in London—Efforts to establish despotism by law—Popular resistance—Book of constitutions—Government of the clergy—Frequency of great councils or parliaments held by William—Their powers—Property and its duties—New and amended laws—Commissions appointed—Curious specimen of William's conveyancing—Amusing traits—Anecdotes of Norman customs—Language—In courts of law—In schools—The queen withdraws into Normandy—State of England—Erection of new fortresses—Fresh outbreaks—Revolt of the English lords—Invasion of the Scots—Fall of York castle—Violence and excesses of the insurgents—The king marches into the North—Subdues the insurgent earls—Pardons them—Takes Earl Waltheof into favour—Gives him the hand of his niece—Marriage festivities—Keeps his Christmas at York—Discontent of the Norman barons—Rebellion in Normandy—English army led by William—Defeats his enemies—Death of earl Edwin—Conspiracy of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland—Of the Norman earls of Hereford, Gloucester, Norfolk—Chivalric adventures—William imprisons Waltheof—The insurgent earls routed—Besieges the Earl of Norfolk—Anecdotes of the Norman ladies—Calumnies against William—Edgar Atheling—William's affected respect and consideration for him.

The labours of William I., as a lawgiver, were not unattended with important results, such as have materially influenced the character of our institutions and the ecclesiastical and civil state of England, through every stage of their career. With regard to the separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction—a subject

fraught with struggles and dissentions not yet terminated—we can adduce no higher authority than the words of the Conqueror himself. They are strong and fearless; for he no longer required the aid, or dreaded the assumed supremacy, of the papal court. Resolved to render his prelates and clergy as submissive to the royal will, if not to the civil laws, as the least of his vassals, he commenced a work, which he must have felt to be of an Herculean kind, with the indomitable spirit and resolution which always characterised him. He says expressly, in a proclamation to the sheriffs and freeholders of Essex, Hertfordshire, and Middlesex, that, finding the ecclesiastical laws of England neither good in themselves nor consistent with the sacred canons, he had them amended by the advice of his common council, the council of his archbishops, his other bishops and abbots, and all the chief men of his kingdom. "And I therefore, in virtue of my royal authority, command and direct that no bishop or archdeacon shall any more treat of the episcopal laws in meetings of the hundred."[5]

This was only the prelude to more extensive reforms, and he seemed disposed to determine in favour of the civil power the grand question of the right of investiture, invariably claimed by the Roman see. The representative of St. Peter at length took alarm at the temporal encroachments of a potentate of such consummate ability and energy, but he did not venture to proceed to open threats. William was no antagonist against whom the spiritual bolts could be hurled with impunity;[6] and

[5] LL. Guglielmi Conq. 55, 58, ap. Wilkins.

[6] He set the first example, followed by Henry II., of defining the great boundaries of the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions; of the general

as far as the Anglo-Norman empire extended, it was soon apparent to which side the victory was likely to incline.

It is difficult to point out the precise period when ecclesiastics first claimed exemption from the civil jurisdiction of States. It is known that, during the early and purest ages of the Christian church, they pretended to no such privilege. The authority of the magistrate extended to all persons and causes. Unhappily, some acts of complaisance, flowing from veneration for their sacred character, were in process of time improved into exemption.[7] Before the establishment of the spiritual court in England, rights of advowson were tried in the county courts, where the presence of the king's officer and other lay assistants prevented partial and unjust decisions by the ecclesiastical judge. But, after the separation of the spiritual and civil jurisdictions by William, the clergy endeavoured to draw all causes of this nature into their peculiar court. This was very properly resisted by the civil power, and the trial of the question thus disputed was prudently reserved for the king's supreme court.[8]

Under the vigorous temporal sway of the Conqueror, even heresy and idolatry were made crown pleas,[9] a precedent for the act of supremacy which has now religious power within the Church. It has none beyond it, either

councils, and the statutes of Clarendon. And it was full time, "*when holy orders were become a full protection for all enormities.*"—Note to Hale, f. 136.

[7] Du Cange collected most of the causes with respect to which the clergy arrogated an exclusive jurisdiction.—Glossary ; Curia Christiana ; Giannone, Civil Hist. of Naples.

[8] Ld. Lyttleton, Hist. of Hen. II. 4, 371; Notes to C. J. Hale, A. 160.

[9] Letters on the Eng. Constitution, Dyer, 167.

from the gospel, the Christian code, or from any fundamental law in civil society. It has hence been generally admitted that he introduced some laws, both ecclesiastical and civil, besides altering and adapting to his new state of things those already in force. M. Houard, a Norman advocate, in his curious work [1] on the old French laws, denies that the laws of William bear any relation to those of Edward the Confessor; but his arguments have been sufficiently refuted by M. Kelham,[2] who correctly observes that the word "*tint*" implies that these laws did not originate even in Edward, but were handed down to him. "These are the laws," runs the title, "and customs which William the king granted to all the people of England after the conquest of the realm; they are the same as king Edward, his cousin, held before him." [3] These are, moreover, the oldest Gallo-Normanic laws extant, which he brought with him out of Normandy; and are comprised in a single manual, as were those of the Confessor, containing the Saxon laws, by which he had bound himself to rule, and in pursuance of which the customs and laws all over England were collected, that the people might be governed by them. The reader who knows what these laws, and rights, and customs were, will be at no loss to make the proper inference.[4]

It is pleasing to reflect that an impartial examination

[1] Anciennes Loisd es François conservées dans les coutumes Angloises, Rouen, 1760.

[2] Prelim. Discourse to the Laws of King William, in his Dictionary of the Norman or old French language.

[3] "Ces sont les leys et les custumes que le reis William grantut à tut le peuple de Engleterre, apres le conquest de la terre; ici les meismes que le reis Edward son cousin tint devant lui."—Wilkins; Hale; Blackstone; Brady; Dyer, &c.

[4] Ibid.

of the conflicting arguments of opposite parties, leads directly to the conclusion that King William was, however unwillingly, in the strict sense of the word a constitutional sovereign; that his arbitrary temper, his strong passions, his rapacity in confiscation,[5] and his cruel violence in suppressing the outbreaks of the people, cannot supply a single argument to favour the views of Norman absolute government, or establish the slightest inherent right of sovereignty, independent of the will of the people.

The constitution and the existing laws, in fact, dictated terms to the conqueror of Harold,[6] not of English liberty; and ultimately extended their free salutary influence to the country which, with the aid of Europe, won a single battle in a war of succession, but was soon repeatedly subdued by and received the law from England, and from princes of Anglo-Saxon descent. These great historic facts demonstrate the fundamental rights of her people, and her constitutional claims, founded so early upon political victories, which more than counteracted the effects of that of Hastings, and the subsequent proclamations of military law against insurrections; claims which have never ceased to be advocated to the present moment.

With regard to the details of William's ecclesiastical reforms at this period, we may refer the reader to the monarch's own charter, and to the learned Selden's notes on Eadmerus. For the number and different kinds

[5] William was unable to avail himself of Machiavel's insidious counsel, that "a town that has been anciently free, cannot be more easily kept in subjection than by employing its own citizens."—The Prince.

[6] "Lingua juravi, mentem injuratam teneo;" and when this is the maxim of a prince, the citizens are usually made instruments of their own oppression.

of ecclesiastical courts, with their special jurisdictions, we can have no better authority than the Commentaries of Blackstone.[7]

It was this independence of the spiritual authority, and its distinction from the common law, or *lex patriæ*, as it was emphatically termed, and which William had repeatedly confirmed, that he was now so laudably anxious to remove.[8]

How much this important subject engaged the attention of the Conqueror may be gathered from the fact, that many of those "capitula legum," which are now adopted by the common law, were enacted in parliaments or great councils under William I. and his predecessors.

Such was the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon institutions, as not to admit even the civil or canon code to be the rule of the administration of common justice; nor did it suffer for any time laws to be imposed by right of conquest, in violation of the love of freedom inherent in the Anglo-Saxon character. It is for this reason that the new monarch never openly interfered with, or presumed to question, the constitutional rights of the English,[9] although he gave up the country to rapine, and swept whole provinces with the Norman fire and sword. Dignified with the title of Conqueror,[1] as wresting the crown from Harold, it constituted a title of succession, not of conquest over a free people, whose monarchy was in great part elective.

[7] Vol. iii. pp. 61 to 68.

[8] Dr. Taylor, Elements of the Civil Law, a work of profound learning, thought, and research.

[9] Rapin ; Tyrrell ; Henry ; Lingard ; Kennett ; Mackintosh ; Brodie ; Hallam ; Alison ; Smythe.

[1] Nouv. Hist. de Nor. ; Chron. de Nor. ; Mackintosh ; Vestigia Anglicana.

Success against a rival was never made a ground on which to alter the established laws of a kingdom, nor in the first exultation of his conquest was such a design dreamed of by a man of sound judgment and consummate ability, who directed, and rose above, instead of being the sport of, circumstances. No imputation, such as that of forcibly imposing laws upon the people by means of conquest or right of war, rests upon the character of William;[2] he might modify them by policy, or subvert by treachery, but, with all his feudal power, he at no time entertained the presumptuous idea of openly attempting to destroy the language, character, and institutions of a comparatively free nation.

There is indeed a charter of the Conqueror which has been preserved,[3] and in which he is made to call himself *rex hereditarius*, meaning heir by will to king Edward; but it was natural, as a mere matter of courtesy towards one possessed of such immense power, and so invariably fortunate, to be addressed by any title that might prove most agreeable; and with respect to the argument based upon so frail a support, it is enough to observe that there is a great difference of opinion among historians with regard to a point which, had it been founded on truth, must have insured a more general acquiescence.[4]

The most arbitrary of his measures, on the other hand, were passed by the common council of the kingdom, and probably at the very time when twelve good men and true out of every county were returned to ascertain the Confessor's laws,[5] pronounced to be as

[2] Grotius; Knyghton; Wilkins; Lambard.
[3] By Dr. Hickes, vol. i. [4] Hist. of Com. Law of England, Hale, 98.
[5] Hoveden; Hale.

sufficient and effectual a parliament as ever was held in England.[6]

How studious he was of legal and constitutional forms in all his proceedings, when not at the head of his army or engaged in repressing the popular insurrections, is proved by the whole tenor of William's reign. This fact, while it shows his respect for existing laws, bears the highest possible testimony to the sterling excellence, the vigour and elasticity of those free institutes which rose to maturity in spite of military subjugation, feudal violence, and arbitrary encroachments of the Crown.

With regard also to the general administration of justice, arbitration, revising and accommodating the rules, methods, and order of proceeding, William is one of the few English monarchs who possessed the clear-headed, penetrating, and comprehensive qualities necessary to form a great legislator and statesman. If we only possessed more enlarged materials upon which to form our judgment, it would very probably be found that he had both more compass as well as acuteness of mind than any other of our monarchs, not excepting perhaps our first Edward, the English Justinian. For unless he had laid the foundation of those fixed and stable rules, little differing from some we now hold and practise, upon which the latter raised his reputation, we should not have preserved their substance and contexture as handed down to the present day.[7] He set his successors the example of checking the pretensions of the papal power, and repressing the pride and insolence of the clergy. He defined the bounds of ecclesiastical

[6] Blackstone, Comment. vol. iv.

[7] Sir M. Hale, Hist. of Com. Law, 152; Black. Com. p. 452.

jurisdiction and of the Common Pleas, preparing the way, and indicating the direction, of the future "Magna Charta." It was still more so with regard to the inferior courts, whether of counties, hundreds, or courts baron.

He moreover provided against the interruption of the common justice of the kingdom; settled the solemnities and efficacies of fines in crown pleas, and by itinerant justices; appointed places of record; a common repository for registries and surveys of land; fixed the method of tenures, of recoveries; and consulted the safety and preservation of the peace by the suppression of robberies.

If we consider also the general direction of the Conqueror's writs, as well as that of his charters,[8] it must be admitted that the germs at least of popular representation were fostered by his general councils; and that he conceded the first Magna Charta under the Norman kings, when he had it recorded that the king reserved to himself from the "freemen of this kingdom" nothing but their free services due to him according to law; that they, the English, shall hold and enjoy their estates well and in peace, free from all exactions and taillage. This was ratified and confirmed by the common council of the whole kingdom, which can by no explanation be confined only to the Norman nobles and their followers.

Here is clearly the theory of the old Saxon liberty upheld, explained, reduced into form and law; the long-asserted liberty of the English freemen, and of the representative body of the people; however often lost sight of, obscured, or wholly violated, either by the turbulence of the people, or the tyranny of the administration to whom they confided the sacred trust.

[8] Ex Cartulario Canob.; West in Biblioth. Cotton. fol. 1653; Quarterly Review; Hallam; Brodie; Smythe; Mackintosh.

The county courts, hundred courts, and courts baron, were held in the reign of William as under the Saxon kings; and it was in one of these that his half-brother Odo, Earl of Kent, was cast and lost his cause.[9] So closely in fact did William adhere to the theory at least of the Saxon laws, that the representation of the Commons in the general council or parliament of the country, as far as it obtained, was no innovation introduced by William. One fact is decisive on this point, and shows that the Commons took part, on some occasions, even in the great Saxon councils.

In the enacting of the grand law of *Tythes*, it was ordained, we are informed, by the king, by the barons, and by the people.[1] Again, in the fourth year of his reign, the king, by the advice of his barons, summoned at London a general assembly of all the nobles and wise men, to ascertain, as already has been stated, what their laws and customs were. Upon their being approved, he consented that they should be ratified at the specified request of the *English commonalty*. They were then ordered to be strictly observed throughout the kingdom.[2]

This record also tends further to prove that the *barones Francigeni et Angli Nostri*, "our French and English barons," were equally engaged to ratify the laws of King Edward.

In the same year, William succeeded in bringing the great prelates, bishops, and abbots, under the full baronial tenure. The twelve representatives of each county having shown what the Anglo-Saxon customs were, they were carefully written out by Aldred, archbishop

[9] Lambard, De Pris. Ang. Leg. v. 288.

[1] *A rege, baronibus, et populo.*—Lam. De Pris. Ang. Leg.; Spel. Con. Temp. v. 288.

[2] Chron. of Lichfield; Lambard; Spelman.

of York, and Hugo, the bishop of London, and received the confirmation of the barons in the parliament of that day.[3] Selden evidently considers the commons as represented in that parliament, a term which he frequently employs. Now these representatives, it also appears, were many of them Englishmen; and in this *common council,* the very name denoting its constituency, was passed the famous law of scot and lot[4] in favour certainly of the Normans;[5] to the purport that no Frenchman should be charged with double taxes and duties, as being a foreigner, but that he should *pay his easy share* and proportion like any natural born Englishman, evidently here referring to a previous law or custom in use.

It was in such a general assembly of the wise men of the kingdom, sent by the counties, that Lanfranc was elected, in the course of the same year, to the see of Canterbury, by the specified consent of the lords and prelates and the whole people; in other words, by the parliament of England.[6]

Like some glorious vessel rising above the storms and terrors of the raging seas, still threatening to engulph her, and holding on her destined way till she hails her native port, that parliament derived strength from the very elements of strife and faction; from the weaknesses, the errors, and the yet darker crimes of the princes who attempted to destroy its national influence, and to arrest its bold and free career.

It is a remarkable circumstance, not insisted upon

[3] Selden, Titles of Honour, 580; Hovenden, Collect.; Laws of Glanville. [4] "Amplote and Anscote;" Spel., Gloss. Amplote, fol. 31.

[5] Char. Reg. ap. Lambard, c. 34, 170.

[6] Gervas. Dercher Act. point Cant. fol. 1653; Relat. Will. prim. ad finem tract. de Gavelkind.

by any of William's biographers, that the covert means adopted by him to arrest the progress of public liberty were in the end favourable to it, by exciting national energy and opposition, which, taking advantage of the weakness or the wants of his successors, gradually developed the inherent power and capabilities of the British Constitution. He himself felt that he was here no conqueror; that he had acquired England only under a pledge to rule by the laws of the land. He knew that the English had a right to liberty, and were resolved to maintain it; and hence his open and professed sanction, and even advocacy of it in public assemblies, and in presence of his Norman barons, however his own ambition and avarice impelled him to infringe it, where aristocratic treachery or popular violence afforded him an excuse for drawing the sword. He acknowledged it in more than one public charter; and thus sanctioned delegations of power from the people, the best and wisest provision in our laws.

Mere forms, like those observed by William, often overshadowed principles; and the germs of bad as well as of good laws were freely scattered by his hand. But he saw that the institutions of England in almost every case favoured liberty; and, though his charters were not without defects, and in an age when serfdom prevailed, applied only to the free tenants, they opened the way to more extended rights, the legal inheritance of all Englishmen.

Anglo-Saxon liberty was deeply stained with that basest and most revolting of human crimes, the plague spot and certain corruption of every social community in which it is allowed—man's property in man; and it is to William, and a few of his more enlightened suc-

cessors, aided by the great councils of the nation, that English law is indebted at this day for its non-recognition of the name of slave. The modifications of the constitution, which date their rise from the reign of William, resulted in making every slave, as soon as he put his foot on English ground, a free man; and, with all the drawbacks of our feudal and Anglo-Norman laws, they gave us, from the first acknowledgment of William, an assurance of the ultimate triumph of those principles which are the main bulwarks of our English Constitution.

The ancient Britons, indeed, had their public councils, though we do not possess any body of their laws;[7] but the constitutions of our Saxon ancestors[8] are to be found both in our public libraries and in print. The latter doubtless were in possession of charters, though not to the same extent as the Normans;[9] but neither supply us with a regular digest or code of laws, which may deserve the name of a *written Constitution.*

This great national triumph was achieved by the untiring energy, the repeated and persevering efforts of the people themselves, which gathered strength from the opposition and oppression of the strong, and took

[7] Hywel Dda's (Leges Wallicæ) are of a subsequent period.

[8] In the Cott. Collection, British Museum; in Bishop Parker's, Bennet's College, Cambridge; and in the Bodleian, Oxford. They were first printed by Lambard, under the title of "Archaionomia," London, 1568. Wheler published an enlarged edition at Cambridge, in 1644, and Spelman, his British Councils in 1639. Dr. David Wilkins, at the royal command, republished an edition in folio of Wheler, improved and enlarged, in 1721. This work contains all the Anglo-Saxon, Gallo-Norman, and Latin laws (some unquestionably spurious), which now remain, from Ethelbert, who began his reign in 561, to the Magna Charta of Henry III., who began his reign in 1216.

[9] Ingulphus, Hist. Abb. Croyland, 70.

advantage of the follies and vices of the weak or conflicting rulers, who strove to outbid their rivals by parting with their prerogatives, and by the amount of their concessions to the popular power.

"The Book of Constitutions," [1] so called in our Anglo-Saxon laws, from which most probably the name as well as the spirit of our English Constitution was derived, is simply a short book of homilies. But it was from that, and from the Dom or Doma-bek [2] there alluded to, that William borrowed his new code, with certain additions and modifications from the Danish and Norman; as well as his idea of the great Doomsday book, which was no novelty or innovation, a general survey having been made in the reign of king Alfred. The word constitution also occurs in Hywel Dda's Laws, though not exactly in the modern sense, and must have arisen, as the term itself implies, from the circumstance of both the British and the Anglo-Saxon laws having been made in common council, both by the clergy and the people, amid a great throng, as it is added, of the servants of God.[3]

It will thus be seen that, notwithstanding his arbitrary propensities and stern military rule, William was only one in the order of constitutional succession, and was mainly borne forward by the popular impulses already given, and by the stream of circumstances and

[1] Liber Constitutionum; Wilkins; Leges Anglo-Sax. p. 147.

[2] Dom, or Doom, or Doma-book, from the Anglo-Sax. *Dom* and *Bek*, Liber Judicialis; and so we have domesdaeg, the day of judgment; and William the Norman's Domesday-book, or census book of all England; the fine original MS. of which is in the Exchequer. See Bishop Wilkins under the head *Dombec*, in the Saxon laws. Leg. Ang. Sax. p. 48; also, Dyer's Letters on the English Constitution.

[3] "Tam cleri quam populi; in magna servorum Dei frequentia."—Ibid.

events which carried fortunes prouder and greater than his own—the free destinies, only yet half accomplished, of a mighty people.[4]

We must not, therefore, forget, even as matter of antiquity as well as history, that, though the house of commons, considered in its present form as a house of representatives, rose out of the feudal system, provision was made under William for the government of the kingdom by the old Saxon laws; that those liberties, moreover, truly and emphatically called the liberties of the subject, since more clearly defined, and more indisputably settled, were guaranteed, and supported, at least in theory, by one who himself never assumed the title or character of a conqueror.[5]

Soon after his accession to the throne, William opened his great councils or parliaments very frequently. They

[4] This sacred and majestic power of the English common or popular law, over the will of the most arbitrary sovereigns, will hardly be questioned in the case of William, if we examine the fundamental principles upon which it is based. The result will be found that which William and his successors soon experienced, and to which they subscribed with a reluctant hand. "That the people have a right to a free enjoyment of life, liberty, and property; a right to make those laws by which they or governed; and a right to share in that power which puts the laws in execution." To these may be added the excellent maxim of good king Edward, which has ever been deemed a fundamental one in our law: "That if any law or custom be contrary to the law of God, of nature, or of reason, it ought to be looked upon as null and void." These fundamental principles form part of our legal code, so that we may apply to them what the translator of the "Mirror of Justices," says of the common law, "That when the laws of God and reason came into England then came we." It is the peculiar feature of it that no part can either be made or altered at the will of the prince.—Fortescue De Ll. Angliæ, cap. 9.

[5] This title, conferred upon him after his victory over Harold, was never employed by the Conqueror himself; who, aware of the limits of his power, would hardly have been content to sign his name "William Bastardus," as he generally did, had he enjoyed an absolute sovereignty.

were generally held annually, or at still shorter periods, and were summoned by special writs from the king. That in these he followed the custom or unwritten law established before the Conquest, we have the testimony of the author of the "Mirror of Justices," a work, if reliance is to be placed on the authority of Lord Coke, written before that period. Blackstone also frequently refers to it as one of great antiquity and of high authority. It distinctly states that the counties were assembled by king Alfred *twice* a year or oftener, if need were;[6] so that calling parliaments once, or oftener in the year, would appear to have been a very ancient practice, and one to which William was bound by such constitutional or unwritten law, as well as by circumstances, to adhere.

The extent and peculiar powers of these great councils or parliaments, even under William, do not so clearly appear. Whatever may be understood by the *comites* or earls[7] in Alfred's time, whether they were meant to include the commons, or were confined to thanes and counts who held jurisdiction over the counties, there is sufficient reason to conclude that the present house of commons sprung out of the latter feudal system, so widely extended and established, if not introduced, by the Norman king.

We find that at first the greater barons, those who held immediately under him in perpetuity, and who in

[6] Letters on the Eng. Constitution, p. 57.

[7] Chap. I. sect. 3. Les Premiers Constitutions ordainés per les viels Roys: Del Roy Alfred. "Pur le estate del royalme fist l' roy Alfred assembler les Comites, et ordeigne pur *usage perpetuelle* que a deux foits par l'an ou plus souvent, pur mestier en temps de peace se assembleront à Londres pur *parliamenter* sur le guidement du peuple d' Dieu, &c."—La Somme appelle Mirroir des Justices, edit. 1642; Dyer's Letters on the English Constitution, 57, 60.

that right were of the king's great council, formed the virtual representation; and when these were allowed to alienate their possessions, so that others held under them by the same military service, the new proprietors possessed the same right. These, called by most writers the lesser barons, growing too numerous to attend in person, were obliged to appear by representatives; and out of these arose what were afterwards, and still are, called *knights of the shire*. But this, too, was only a virtual representation, and those who did not hold by knight's service, and therefore were not free,—those who held by soccage, villeinage, or prædial tenures, that great mass of the people,—were all excluded. The representation consequently was then at least far from being universal. But at length, as zeal for arms and enterprise somewhat abated, as commerce and manufactures increased, as trading towns and cities grew wealthy and considerable, it was thought necessary and reasonable, that they should send representatives from the whole body of the community.[8]

It has been supposed that the spirit of aristocracy, in some points of view, rose with William; that he made the crown hereditary, altered the English fiefs or tenures, and dispossessed the English nobility to make room for his Normans. This is in great part true; and it might be added that circumstances and events, over which he had little control, left him no alternative. His system was necessarily accompanied with burdens unknown to the Saxons; and their immediate effect was, to raise the power of the few over the rights of the many. Yet there were parts even of the latter feudal system,[9] favour-

[8] Letters on the English Constitution, 57, 60.

[9] The greater barons, or tenants in chief, had then lesser barons, or

able to public liberty, and which wanted only a more equal distribution of property, and the spirit of commerce, to advance claims to greater durability.[1] But with those wants, as they were, and which yet to some extent exist, the restrictive system which succeeded the feudal, can, like it, only continue during the term prescribed to the corruption and monopoly, which either precede the reformation of states, or lead to their certain dissolution.

With a view of cementing the strict union between England and Normandy, William is believed, thus early in his reign, to have entertained the difficult project of totally abolishing the English language. For that purpose, he ordered that in all the schools throughout the kingdom, the youth should be instructed in the French tongue; a practice which was continued from custom till after the reign of Edward III., and was never indeed

knights, who held under them. Thirteen knights' fees made a baron's peer, and twenty knights' fees an earl's. At the close of William's reign, the number of those who held under him, *in capite*, by knight's service, was upwards of seven hundred.—Elsynge on the Manner of Parliaments in England; Doomsday Book; Letters on the English Constitution.

[1] Harrington, with profound truth, observes, that "the centre and basis of every government is no other than the fundamental laws of the same." "As there is a private reason," he adds, "which is the interest of a private man; so there is that reason, which is the interest of mankind, or the whole;" and government he calls, after Hooker, "the soul of a nation;" and what he calls the mind and will of a nation is what others mean by a constitution. Machiavel comes near the truth when he says, "then a city may be called free, and a state may pronounce itself durable, when it is founded on good laws and orders at first, and has not that necessity of good men to maintain it. Of such laws and principles many ancient commonwealths were formerly constituted, and continued a good while." Dr. Johnson defines a constitution to be "an established form of government; a system of laws and customs." Fortescue, Blackstone, and most lawyers, consider it as the spirit of the laws; and that our constitution is in our statutes.—Lord Fortescue, Preface to his Records; Dyer on the Principles of the English Constitution, 24.

totally discontinued in England. The pleadings in the supreme courts of judicature were in French; the deeds were often drawn in the same language, and the laws were composed in that idiom. No other tongue was used at court. It became the language of all fashionable societies till it was adopted as a sort of universal vehicle of speech in all the courts of Europe, as at this day; and most of the English themselves, as if ashamed of their own country, affected to excel in a foreign dialect.

From this attention of William to the amalgamation of the two people by means of one language and one body of laws, which had the effect rather of anglicising those of Normandy than of grafting French institutions upon our own, and from the extent of foreign dominion annexed to the crown of England, there naturally proceeded the great admixture of French, at present met with in our language, but which certainly harmonised and enriched it.[2]

National suspicion having once been aroused that a change in the laws, as well as in the language, was contemplated, it was not long before a spirit of defection and revolt, promoted by men like the archbishop of York in the north, and Frederick, abbot of St. Alban's, in the south, warned William as to the policy of arresting or retracing his steps. He was prevailed upon by Lanfranc, now archbishop of Canterbury, to renew his oaths to preserve inviolate the laws of king Edward and his predecessors. To render the ceremony more imposing by giving it a religious character, he swore

[2] Hale, C. L. of England, 36 Ed. III. c. 15; Selden, Spicileg. ad Eadmer, 189; Fortescue, Laud. Leg. Angl. c. 48; Ingulf. 71, 88; Chron. Rothom. A.D. 1066.

as usual, over the reliques of good saint Alban, and the deputies from the discontented districts took their departure not only satisfied,[3] but overjoyed, to their own homes.

But although for the third time the Anglo-Saxon laws and usages were thus confirmed by a sort of royal capitulation, which so early set an example of deceiving the people, to his successors, especially to his sons, to Stephen, and to king John, it had only a temporary influence in allaying the elements of disaffection and dispute. This arose from various causes: William was as uneasy in champing the bit and feeling the rein in the hand of constitutional power, as were the people under his encroachments and his watchful policy in taking advantage of all overt acts of insurrection, to extend the line of his military prerogative, and draw the exterminating sword. The laws were moreover vague and ill defined, and it was for this reason, that upon another threatened outbreak he summoned, as we have noticed, a general or common council of his kingdom, more clearly to ascertain the extent and meaning of them,[4] as some guide, no doubt, how far he might safely venture in future.

That William's royal prerogatives were farther limited by the English laws, we learn from the fact that many possessed of lands in the reign of the Confessor were returned in Doomsday-book as retaining the same, which continue to the present day in the hands of their successors. This could hardly have been the case, if the lands of the English had been vested in a conqueror. About this time also the charters of the ancient

[3] M. Paris, in vita Frederici Abbatis Sancti Albani.

[4] Hoveden, 600; Ingulf. 88; Brompton, 982; Knyghton, 2355.

Saxon kings were pleaded [5] and allowed by William in council; and by the same charters titles were made or created to lands, liberties, franchises, and regalities, affirmed and adjudged in presence of the king, and signed by his hand. Even when exception was offered on the ground that by the Conquest those charters had lost their force, the claims were finally allowed; a singular admission against the plea of the victor, had all men's rights been vested in him alone.[6]

This could not be pretended; for under the vigorous sway of William titles were not empty names; offices, mere sinecures, filled by deputy; and property, masses of land and wealth without their attaching responsibilities and duties. He was at least as jealous of the assumptions of the lords and bishops, as of the people; and was perhaps of opinion that kings held parliaments and councils with their people, even before bishops and lords were made.[7] Dignity was connected with duty, and distinctions of name were titles of office, both in France and this country, the Saxon *berotica* corresponding to the French duke, while the peculiar office of the marquis was to guard the marches; the name "earl," Danish *eorle*, honourable, a shire man, or county man, had the government of a whole county. So that an earl sitting as judge over a shire it was necessary he should understand the laws, his office being to administer them in his county court; and William resembled Alfred, at

[5] Eadmerus; Selden; Hale, C. Law of Eng. 86, 88.

[6] William probably was acquainted with that maxim of another profound politician, Tacitus, that what is unnatural and violent cannot last long: "Nunquam fidem esse potentium quæ nimia est;" than which no truth has been more amply illustrated by history.

[7] Milton, Defence of the People of England; Author of "Modus tenendi Parliamenta."

least in one respect, by requiring the earls to be well acquainted with the laws,[8] and even putting some of the most unjust judges to death.

If farther evidence were wanting of the constitutional acts, the confirmations, the charters, and the popular concessions extorted from William, whatever were his real views, it may be found in the numerous recoveries obtained even against his own friends and relatives, both by heirs and successors, of the *seizin* of their predecessors before the Conquest. Examples such as that contained in the record of Pinendon, by the archbishop of Canterbury, were not unfrequent in the early part of his reign.[9]

In addition to William's inquiries into the common or customary and unwritten laws of England, many of them newly ratified by him, he extended them to the inferior branches, properly called the king's ecclesiastical, the king's military, the king's maritime, or the king's forest laws; all of them subordinate to the higher courts.[1] Of his skill and experience in the branch of conveyance, a curious specimen has been recorded, which shows at once his ready wit, and the facility he had acquired from long use in expressing the terms of law; then considerably less technical, but more concise, and doubtless quite as much to the purpose.

Though his forms of conveyance were in some cases extremely short, and in others not very satisfactory to

[8] Bacon on the Eng. Government; Turner, Hist. of Ang. Sax. ii. 6. x.

[9] The whole process and proceedings may be read at the end of Selden's notes on Eadmerus, and Spelman's Glossaries, title *Dreunches*. See the same also respecting the separation of the bishop's consistory from the sheriff's court. Blackstone, vol. iii., contains a brief account of the various kinds of ecclesiastical courts, pp. 61 to 68. Also Judge Hale, C. L. of England, 28, 29.

[1] Ibid.

those whose estates were subjected to them, it is clear from this instance that William would have made a very admirable lawyer in any branch of the profession; and that it was, perhaps, this sound and penetrating judgment which enabled him to preserve his throne, and to rule the English by dividing all, yet mortally offending none of the existing parties. If the great number of his charters were as pointed and condensed as that conferred upon his Norman hunter,—notwithstanding "he was rough and covetous towards the English in his taxes, laws, and in giving to his Normans their lands"[2]—it is probable that he gave much less trouble to the gentlemen of the long robe than some of his successors:—

"I, William, king, the third year of my reign,
Give to thee, Norman Hunter—to me thou art
Both leefe and *deere*—
The Hop and the Hopton, and all the bounds
Up and down;
Under the earth to hell, above the earth to heaven;
From me and mine, to thee and thine,
As good and as fair, as ever they were.
To witness that this is sooth, I bite the white
Wax with my tooth
Before Jugge, Maude, and Margery, and
My youngest son Henry,
For a bow and a broad arrow, when I come
To hunt upon Yarrow."[3]

The only *jeu d'esprit* which will bear a comparison, we think, with this royal mode of conferring a grant upon his Norman hunter, is among the curious odds and ends of Thomas Hearne, under the head of a descent of the family of Cognisby, which, if the author

[2] Speed, Hist. of England.

[3] Stowe, Ex libro Richmond.

could have been suspected of satire, we might conclude was meant in ridicule of the Battle-abbey roll:—

"William of Cognisby
Came out of Brittany,
With his wife Tiffany,
And his maid Maufas,
And his dogge Hardigrass." [4]

Happy for King William and the people had he required only a provision for the masters of his hawks

[4] Præfat ad Fordun. Vestigia Ang. i. 191. To such an extent was the fashion carried of tracing family descent and settlement in England to the time of the Conqueror, that it was soon turned into a subject of ridicule. The unfortunate Chatterton, it is perhaps not generally known, derived his pedigree from the Sieur de Chaubaulonne, of the house of Rollo, the first duke of Normandy; and that of his friend, Mr. Stephen, the pewterer, from Fitzstephen, son of the Earl of Aumarle, in 1095, son of Odo, earl of Blois and lord of Holdernesse. That such pretensions were early ridiculed, we have an instance in Shakspeare, who makes his drunken tinker, Christopher Sly (in the "Taming of the Shrew"), boast in his blundering way, that "the Slys came in with Richard Conqueror."—Ibid. This reminds us of a more modern instance, in humble life, and perhaps, from the circumstances, rather more worthy of credibility. At one of the late audits of Sir Edward Blount, Bart. (Shropshire), some of the tenants were contesting the point as to which of their families could boast of having rented an estate on the property for the longest period. A farmer named Allen, proved to their satisfaction that he and his ancestors had rented under the family for a period of nearly 780 years; that his ancestors had immigrated from Normandy with the Blount family at the time of the Conquest. This remarkable fact, if indeed so, redounds greatly to the credit of both the successive landlords and tenants; and we can only recommend it as an example for the emulation of both classes through the kingdom. There are a few instances of disinterestedness in the followers of the Conqueror left on record, which, if also true, are not a little creditable to the parties. William Fitzrichard, a Norman captain, refused to accept of any land by way of recompense, declaring that he followed William from a sense of duty, and that he was not to be tempted by stolen goods. Like the Beaumonts, and a few others, he returned into Normandy to enjoy his old moderate inheritance.—Ord. Vital. Vestigia Ang. ii. 199. See also Battle Abbey Roll.—Appendix.

and hounds. He had already bestowed upon his chief followers the estates held by the English lords, and their adherents who had joined the late insurrections. He was now enabled to establish funds for the payment of his soldiers. This he effected by taking into his hands the demesne lands which belonged to king Edward, and annulling in council all the dispositions and grants made during his brief reign by Harold; a measure which subsequently led to his great national survey.

The estates forfeited by many of Harold's adherents who fell at the first invasion, or who persevered in the struggle, were in themselves very considerable, though insufficient to meet the claims of so large a body of expectants, for whom William felt bound in honour to provide. Many innocent persons doubtless suffered, as well as a third class, who had kept aloof to watch the progress of events; and, being chiefly men of high note, were subjected to the confiscatory process renewed by the politic monarch upon every provoked insurrection.

At the same time, as we learn from Spelman in the case of Edwin of Sherborne, restitution was made in cases where the party could prove that he had not appeared in arms against King William. Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, having opposed him at the outset, a large portion of his lands was granted to Odo, bishop of Bayeux, but afterwards recovered by Lanfranc, Stigand's successor, in full council, summoned by special writ from the king. We may adduce also several other grants and charters made by him, mentioned in the history of Ely, and in Eadmerus, for restoring to bishoprics and abbeys such lands or goods as had been taken from them unjustly. Still the ruin of Stigand, resolved upon to make way for William's favourite

diplomatist, Lanfranc, led to the gradual subversion of the English prelacy in favour of the Norman and other foreign aspirants.[5]

Among other Norman laws early introduced by William, and strongly countenanced by the great prelates and clergy, was the singular trial or ordeal by battle,[6] already practised in several European countries. It is a species of trial, according to Blackstone, of high antiquity, and though it became obsolete, leaving its traces only in the as barbarous and absurd practice of the modern duel, it remained legally in force, until expressly abolished by a statute of recent date. We may refer its origin to the chivalrous and enterprising spirit of men, in those turbulent ages, who, when they happened to quarrel, having no umpires equal in their own estimation to themselves, found no resource but in an appeal to the "ultima ratio" of their swords. Nor was it less revolting from the superstition implied in such an appeal to Providence, on the presumption that it was bound to interfere to give the victory to the just instead of to the strong. It was considered an excellent device, perhaps, for getting rid of a vexatious suit at law, a rival in love or war, or the nearest of kin who stood in the royal or aristocratic road to preferment.[7]

[5] William, however, held his new Norman churchmen, as well as his lay lords, in great subjection. He would allow none, however high or ambitious, to dispute his sovereign will and pleasure. The crimes alleged against Stigand were in great part unfounded.—Knyghton, 2345 ; Anglia Sacra, vi. 5, 6; Ypod. Neust. 438; Eadmerus ; Hoveden, 453; Diceto, 482.

[6] Such is the law of France and Normandy to this day, as well as of the Isles of Jersey and Guernsey, which once formed part of the same.—Terrier, l. ii. c. 2.

[7] Black. Com. 3 v. 357 ; Will. cap. 68 ; Barring on Strat. 202, 294 ; Robertson, Hist. of Charles V. i. v. 62, 357 ; Coutumier de Normandie.

Further, with regard to the Norman laws introduced by William at this time, they were not so extensive as to endanger the constitutional customs and liberties of the people, and unless a noble ground-work had been laid in his reign, it was impossible that in the next age, so soon after as Henry II., the laws of England should have received such accessions of strength and excellence. We may form some estimate of this prodigious impulse of constitutional power in a right direction from the labours of Glanville and of Lyttleton; and of its steady and connected progress, in spite of every obstacle from the accession of the great Norman, who led the English through a sort of battle ordeal to assume that superiority in the eyes of Europe which they have never since lost. This could only be the result of popular laws and national independence. No longer a prey to foreign invasion, instead of wasting their energies in defensive wars upon their own soil, they soon carried their victorious arms under so great a leader to the very gates of Paris.

In 1069, William, aware of the approaching outbreaks,[8] thought it prudent that queen Matilda and his family should withdraw once more into Normandy. The continued confiscations, pursued as a system, the open violence or secret frauds perpetrated by the great vassals and mesne lords under the name of law, through the ascendency obtained in the great councils, spread alarm through the country. Numbers both of the laity and

[8] The king had accurate intelligence of the proceedings of the insurgent earls. He was always prepared; he had erected a strong fortress at Exeter, of which he gave the command to Baldwin, son of the Count of Brione. He had restored, and fortified also, Canute's famous tower at St. Edmondsbury, which by some writers is said to have been erected by Baldwyn, the abbot, in the Conqueror's own reign.—Vestigia Ang. 105.

clergy, recently deprived of their offices, flew to arms, and joined the banners of the earls Edwin and Morcar in the north. Nearly a third part of England acknowledged their authority. Favourites of the people, not less than of the clergy,[9] they had powerful adherents, and the torch of insurrection was rekindled at different points.

This powerful league, in itself formidable to the government, was strengthened by the accession of the Prince of Wales, of Malcolm, King of Scotland, and of the Danish Sweyn. Hope of accommodation there was none; the causes of deadly hostility lay too deep, and life and honour were alike perilled; for there was scarcely one who had not taken the oath of allegiance to William, or entered into strict alliance with him. But his breach of faith, in refusing the hand of his daughter which he had long promised to earl Edwin, was a fresh challenge to insurrection; and he showed by the removal of his family, by the completion of his fortresses, and his active preparations, that he had fully expected it, and felt himself strong enough to strike down the loftiest heads of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The moment he knew that the two earls had committed themselves by taking the field, he marched his powerful army, ready equipped, into the north.[1] At Warwick he ordered large additions to be made to the immense fortress, of which he gave the command to Henry, one of the sons of the celebrated Roger de Beaumont. That of Nottingham he entrusted to another Norman, named Peverell; and then, advancing by

[9] Angelwine, bishop of the East Angles, with many other prelates, were deprived of their sees by the authority of Rome, and committed to prison for life.—Hayward's Lives of the Norman Kings; Ord. Vit.

[1] Ord. Vit.; W. of Malms.; H. Hunt.; Wace; Walsingham; Thierry.

forced marches, he fell upon the confederates by surprise before they had received half their reinforcements, routed, and compelled them to sue for terms. The city of York surrendered; and, as a punishment for its having joined the league, William, with the imposts levied upon the inhabitants, built another mighty fortress in the most central and commanding spot.[2] He placed in it a strong Norman garrison, reinforced the garrisons of Huntingdon and Cambridge, compelled the Scotch king to sue for peace, and returned in triumph, with his prisoners and hostages, to strike another blow at the insurrection in the south.

Having now fairly drawn the sword, he threw aside the scabbard, and resolved to carry out his confiscatory system against the possessions of the English nobility and clergy to the utmost extent. They had vainly hoped, with the entire people, that the Conqueror's repeated ratification of the old Saxon laws would have protected them. But what he confirmed by law, he knew how to take away by law, much more successfully than by open violence or unjust pretensions. He was aware that property so obtained was never secure; and he proceeded with the aid of his privy and his common councils—in both which his influence was predominant—formally, legally, and therefore irresistibly, to the attainment of

[2] S. Dunelm. Col.; R. Diceto, Col.; Ord. Vit.; Hume; Henry; Lingard. Another was subsequently erected in the same city. The portion now remaining is called Clifford's Tower. Camden only says that William built a prodigious strong castle to keep the nation in awe. Near this site stands the shell of Clifford's Tower, which was blown up 1684.—Gibson's Camden, 717. Drake intimates that it was blown up by design; the citizens being not at all unwilling to rid themselves of so troublesome a neighbour, and such inconvenient badges of distinction as this, which (being erected at Christmas) they sarcastically designated "the old mince-pie."—Drake's Antiquities, p. 289.

his object. Even Fortune seemed to favour, as usual, his insidious and unjust projects, his revenge, and his rapacity; that master passion of all, his love of supreme sway, impelling him to indulge them to the utmost, when he found that he could do so with impunity.

The papal power was in itself a tower of strength to William in this heartless crusade, which, directed against the liberties of a whole people, met with a well-deserved retribution. The same grasping spirit and insatiable thirst of power which made him so refined and profound a master of dissimulation, the same tyranny and oppression, roused the furies of discord in his own family, shook his half-consolidated empire to its centre, and alienated the affections of a consort to whom he was ardently attached. A new list of proscription was already filled; and he lost no time in confiscating the estates of the rebel lords, and transferring ecclesiastical offices of trust and dignity from the English prelacy into the hands of the Norman.[3] The noblest families[4] were imprisoned, banished, or reduced to extreme penury;[5] the natural results, for the time being, of a conquest *de facto*, produced by the fraud and perjury of the ruler, and the re-acting violence of a

[3] Hallam, Middle Ages, ii. 142; Brodie, Hist. of Eng. Constitution; Mackintosh; Smythe, Lec. on Mod. History; Alison; Lingard; Henry; Tyrrell.

[4] A great number, taking the alarm, fled into Scotland, where they were generously protected by Malcolm, and settled in the country. Many high families in Scotland are descended from these exiles—those of Lindsey, Ramsay, Lovell, Towbris, Sandlands, Bissart, Sowlis, Wardlaw, Maxwell, and several others. The nobles who ventured to remain were stripped of their possessions. William secured his future tranquillity by taking from nobles and people even the power to rebel.

[5] Ingulphus; W. of Malms.; Halket; Eadmer; Polydore Virgil; Brady; Mills; Ord. Vit.

people in possession of constitutional rights, into the violation of which they had been purposely goaded. William had thus secured, by means of law, more than all that the most lawless and despotic of conquerors could have proposed to themselves, for by such means he not only acquired, but consolidated and rendered permanent the advantages which he obtained.

The strange anomaly now presented itself of a people who had enjoyed the hard-won boon of free laws, customs, and manners, for a period long enough to form a sort of code or constitution, guaranteed to them by the most sacred oaths, being deprived of all that renders them desirable or valuable by the legal process of those very institutions against which it was made to appear that they had risen in arms. There was no evidence against the wily despot who had betrayed them and stolen the glorious prize which he dared not challenge.

From that period Norman despotism threw away the scabbard, and attempted to rule by force. The king struck boldly at the very basis of English power, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, by depriving the people of their most popular leaders, and excluding them from all places of trust and profit, especially the English clergy of all degrees. It was only to their own courage and persevering energy, under the shield of Providence, that Englishmen owed the preservation of their laws and the extension of their privileges, extorted, when they could no longer be resisted, from the iron sway of William's successors.

More especially perhaps it was to her native freemen, to her future yeomanry, the great body just removed above the serfs of the soil, that England was indebted for her safety, at a time when the heads of her clergy and

her nobles were cut down, lingering in exile or in the gloom of dungeons. Some, warned by the fate of their neighbours, fled; Edgar Atheling and his sisters, with several influential nobles, sought refuge in Scotland.[6] King Malcolm subsequently married one of the sisters, the princess Margaret; and he bestowed lands upon the Saxon lords from whom so many noble families in Scotland derived their descent.[7]

Nor was William's new policy terrible only to the English; the lords of Grentemesnil and Tilleul fell under its ban, for venturing to revisit their families in Normandy without leave.[8] It seemed as if the severity of his government conjured up fresh enemies[9] as fast as others disappeared. But he proceeded more cautiously with regard to his Norman vassals,[1] while any of his

[6] 1068, 9.

[7] Annal. Waver. 1068; Chron. Sax.; M. Paris; R. Hoveden, Annal. 259, Col. 2.

[8] It was this king's policy to rule by dividing, in every sense. He thus gave his chief barons estates in different counties, so as to weaken their power. It is observed by Madox, that the knights' fees of almost every barony were scattered over various counties.—Madox, Hist. of Exchequer; Hallam.

[9] Chiefly Norman, and among his own vassals. The baronial fiefs of England, unlike those of France, were derived actually from the Crown. Its vassals submitted to the conditions imposed. (Ibid.) These barons formed part only of the great councils. The vigorous but arbitrary character of William's feudal government continued to influence the condition of the people for upwards of a century and a half, and the laws and institutions of England during a much longer period.—Dugdale; Madox; Hallam; Lingard; Smythe; Alison; Brodie.

[1] As a body, the barons were able to vindicate their own rights from the encroachments of the royal prerogative; but the bulk of the people were strangers to liberty. Gradually, however, as the population emancipated itself, it came within the pale of laws originally enacted for the benefit of a particular class.—Brodie, Hist. of Brit. Empire, Introd. Fortunately for future ages, the barons were disposed to barter their

former enemies, the more immediate and dangerous, as well as the more remote, remained to threaten his power.

The sons of Harold,[2] assisted by Dermot, King of Ireland, now made a descent upon England with a fleet of sixty-six vessels. They landed on the Devonshire coast; but were attacked and driven to their ships by a body of Normans, led by a son of the Earl of Brittany.[3] Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Salop, with the Isle of Ely, next raised the banners of insurrection.[4] In the north, the Governor of Durham was set upon and slain with 700 of his followers.[5] The people of York next rose and slew Fitz Richard, their Governor, and laid siege to the new castle. A Danish fleet at the same time appeared upon the Humber, landing an army under earl Osborne, king Sweyn's brother; followed by another fleet of 200 sail led by earl Hacon; both of whom, however, William contrived, by the promise of large sums, to withdraw from the contest. But king Malcolm, at the head of a strong force, supported by the English exiles, made himself master of a great part of Cumberland and Northumberland, carrying his ravages as far as Durham, destroyed Holderness, fired the church of St. Peter at Weremouth, and put to the sword the people who had taken sanctuary. Having perpetrated

power for trinkets and baubles, and, according to the progress of refinement, dismissed part of their retainers, that with the produce which these had been accustomed to consume, they might gratify their growing taste for manufactures and foreign commodities.—Ibid.; Smith, Wealth of Nations, ii. 192, 5.

[2] Their names were Godwin, Edmund, and Magnus, all whose efforts to retrieve the fortunes of their family were ineffectual.

[3] Ord. Vit. p. 513; W. Gemit. c. 41. [4] Ord. Vit. 514.

[5] Robert Cummin; this massacre took place the 29th of January, 1069. —Ibid.

the greatest sacrileges and cruelties, sparing neither age nor sex, he made prisoners of the young men and women, whom he carried back with him, and condemned them to a life of hopeless slavery.[6]

The English exiles, headed by Edgar Atheling and the earls Waltheof and Merleswain, marched to the support of the York insurgents, then besieging the castle. On the 19th of September the Normans made a desperate sally and set fire to the town, by which a great portion, including the cathedral, was burnt to the ground. The inhabitants flew to arms, and, joining the insurgent ranks, carried the castle by assault. The whole of the garrison, to the number of 3000 men, with the exception of the Governor and his family, were put to the sword.

William, justly alarmed at the spread of the insurrection on all sides, despatched a force[7] under Roger de Montgomery, followed by another led by Cospatrick, Earl of Gloucester. The Danes had returned, loaded with booty, to their ships; king Malcolm advanced to meet William's generals; and the people of York were left amidst the desolation of their houses and the wreck of their property.

The fall of York Castle was the signal for fresh outbreaks. Earl Hereward rose and established himself in the Isle of Ely; Edric the Forester joined the Welsh, and, combined with them, held William's generals,

[6] There is every reason to conclude, both from dates and facts, that a great part of the cruelties and spoliations of churches attributed to William, in his expedition into Northumberland, were chiefly the work of the barbarous Scots. They left little for William to glean from their harvest of spoil and devastation, or to add to the ruin of districts over which fire and sword had previously passed.

[7] S. Dunelm. Col. 198; J. Brompt. Col. 966.

Briant and Fitzosborne, at bay. A simultaneous national movement—one great united effort to throw off the yoke of the Norman—seemed at this time to pervade all ranks. It was hailed as the last solitary chance left to Englishmen of liberating themselves from a foreign thraldom, which no people who have once tasted freedom will patiently endure. The revolt became more formidable than even William anticipated, when he calculated only on the confiscations which would enrich his treasury. His edicts and proclamations for the better observance of what he emphatically termed "God's peace" [8] had lost their force; and, exasperated at the insurgents, who had invited the Danes to winter in England, he vowed "by the splendour of God," he would hardly leave a single soul alive in all Northumberland.[9] He then commenced another of his rapid marches towards the north, at the head of an imposing army, at once to support his generals, to chastise the rebel earls, and to carry the war into the heart of Scotland, the asylum and support of his English enemies. Fortune had favoured the confederates at the outset; but the star of William was still in the ascendant, and shone forth with brighter lustre amidst storm and darkness. He seemed to glory in the display of that masterly genius, however evil, by which he could always rule, if he could not appease, the waves of a nation's strife.[1]

The mere report of the king's approach at the head of his veteran troops, a vast array of his feudal power,

Speed; Ord. Vit. [9] Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham.

[1] "A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger when the waves ran high
He sought the storms——"
Dryden. Absalom and Achitophel.

led by his great vassals and foreign retainers of every rank, with the fearful oath he had taken, struck terror into the hearts of the English leaders. It seemed to paralyse all their efforts; and the terrible demonstration he made was alone almost sufficient to secure victory to his banners. It was a bloodless campaign, except to the unfortunate inhabitants—the people who were least to blame, yet were subjected to the terrific devastations of both armies. The hopes of freedom were too soon buried in the tyrant's peace of desolation and despair.[2] Not only submission, but vengeance was the watchword of the Normans as they pursued the retreating Scots, indignant that they had left them so few spoils, and at the easy triumph of their great leader, who thought it politic to accept the newly-tendered allegiance of the English earls.

At the same time William did not forget his usual diplomatic arts. Having received favourable accounts from his queen-consort, then entrusted with the regency of Normandy, of the undisturbed state of his continental relations with other powers, and of the continued tranquillity of all his possessions under her able sway,[3] he renewed his alliance with Denmark. He was now at liberty to prosecute the war against Malcolm with the utmost rigour. His object was to overtake the Scotch, before they could receive reinforcements and fall back upon their strongholds in the heart of the country; and so rapid were his movements that he

[2] R. Hoveden; Ord. Vit.; Chron. Sax.; W. of Malms.; Walsingham.

[3] With the exception of her unhappy devotion to the interest of her son Robert, Matilda displayed considerable talent and judgment for the exercise of the high trust reposed in her; a proof also of William's discernment. She was beloved and respected by the Normans.

came up with them in the Lothian, the fertile districts of which he ravaged from end to end. Finding it useless to retreat, Malcolm, like a hunted deer, turned at bay, and drew up his army for battle upon an acclivity, in the strongest position that he could command.

On the approach of the mighty Norman, however, marking his numbers, his more formidable discipline and martial array, Malcolm, like the English earls, was struck with dismay. His troops were equally daunted; and, observing their irresolution, he lost no time in despatching a herald with terms of peace, such as he conceived it would be the Norman's interest to accept.[4]

For some time William delayed accepting the proffered conditions; but, having received the securities he desired, a peace was concluded, or rather purchased; and, on the same terms which he was always happy to grant, he pardoned the exiles and received many of them into favour. He pursued the same policy upon his return with regard to the new Governor of York, earl Waltheof; and having fully re-established his power, he kept his Christmas in that city. There he was attended by the insurgent lords whom he had come to subdue, and who had bought their safety with large sums. Several of them he even promoted to higher rank, especially the Saxon Waltheof, who eventually became Earl of Northumberland.[5]

It is the principle of conquerors, such as William was anxious to appear, to treat a vanquished people more severely in proportion to the valour and pertinacity of their defence. This castigation of qualities in themselves the object of esteem affords the best proof of the

[4] "Melior certa pax, quam sperata victoria."—Livy, xxx.

[5] Ord. Vit. 815; Chron. Sax. 174; R. Hoveden, f. 258, c. 2.

cruel injustice of imposing on a people a foreign yoke, to which they show an unconquerable repugnance.[6] Yet he knew how to appreciate valour in his chiefs; and the desperate character of Waltheof's defence of York extorted his admiration and respect. He not only took him into his favour, but bestowed upon him the hand of his beautiful niece Judith. But the unhappy inhabitants of the insurgent districts had only their lives and homes to offer as an expiation of their dire offence; and they became the prey of rapacious and infuriated soldiers.

Regarding himself as the rightful King of England, after his first coronation in London, William now looked upon the repugnance of the people as a crime. Whenever they resisted his mandates or those of his lieutenants, he seized upon their lands or slaughtered them in the open fields. And notwithstanding his professed adherence to legal measures and the oaths he had taken to administer their common laws, confiscation came to glean whatever conquest had spared before.[7]

Still the English were not to be scorned and trampled upon with impunity; it was the third insurrection in the few years of his reign, and not the last. The military chieftains who followed the Conqueror were either possessed of no estates, or their recent acquisitions greatly exceeded the value of their continental possessions. The kingdom of England was too powerful to be treated as a mere appendage of a Norman duchy, and the English tenantry too formidable to be resigned to the oppressive government of an absent nobility. Hence both the sovereign and his nobles made England their principal residence; and the Nor-

[6] Sir J. Mackintosh, Hist. of Eng. i. 104. [7] Ibid.

man nobles, who at first flattered themselves that they had gained an appendage to their duchy, soon found their mistake.[8] The discipline of law to which they were subjected, in addition to their greater dependence by feudal tenure upon the crown, convinced them that they ought not to prize too highly the apparent liberality of William's grants;[9] the fruits of his successful campaigns both in the north and in the south.[1]

The popular assemblies of the soldiers at this period, by order of the Conqueror, were considered by him as an actual convocation of the military array of the kingdom, for the two-fold purpose of maintaining their discipline by review, and of holding the English in awe. These he was in the habit of summoning both before and after any of his grand expeditions; and at Winchester a body of military obeyed the mandate, amounting to no fewer than 60,000 men, the poorest of whom held property adequate to the maintenance of a horseman and his attendants.[2]

[8] Edin. Review, 26.

[9] In the ensuing year (1070) the king bestowed a great number of English counties and manors upon his favourite barons. Shrewsbury was given to Roger de Montgomery, who already possessed Arundel and Chichester; Buckinghamshire to Walter Giffard; Leicestershire to Hugh de Grentemesnil; Holderness to Odo, nephew of Count Thibeault, who had espoused the Conqueror's half-sister Muriel.—Ord. Vit.; Nouv. Hist. de Normandie.

[1] These lay investitures were not completed without the usual legal formalities in the great councils. He could easily command a majority by means of his numerous vassals, holding the crown lands; and thus, while ostensibly maintaining the laws of King Edward—the foundation of our common law—he carried the system of transfer and confiscation to any extent he pleased. But what were these boasted laws does not so clearly appear.—Fortescue; Brodie; Alison; Smythe; Hallam; Lingard.

[2] Alison; Introd. Hist. of Europe, i. 40; Thierry, ii. 286.

But neither his Christmas festivities nor his triumphal processions and reviews appear to have produced the effect that might have followed from a more conciliatory policy on the part of William, or disposed the people to contentment and submission. It was a deceitful calm. On the first rumour of fresh disturbances, William resumed his arms, and again marched northward. He is stated to have laid waste the country as he advanced; flight, fire and famine attended his track, and the year 1070 was long painfully memorable in the northern towns and villages, from the Humber to the Scottish borders. On his approach to Hexham, all who could escape fled to the woods[3] and mountains, where many perished. The whole country between York and Durham bore the aspect of a desert, without dwellings and without people, and so continued nearly ten years.[4] It realised the appalling picture drawn by Tacitus,—"a solitude—and it was called peace."

But terrible as this was, it was transitory; population, trade and commerce ultimately reasserted their reign; for William passed no laws to render famine and desolation perpetual, nor prohibited the intercourse of one portion of his subjects with the other, or with the people of other lands.[5] The free trade promoted

[3] Hoveden; Ord. Vit.; W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Walsingham. The devastation was followed by a famine, which swept off nearly the whole population.—W. of Malms. 103; Hov. 451; Ord. Vit. 514.

[4] R. Hov. 258, col. 2.

[5] With all his love of absolute power, William never conceived an idea of the refined barbarity to which modern legislation has attained. On the contrary, among the older laws adopted by him was one that the merchant who had gone three voyages in his own ship should be declared noble and assume the dignity of a thane. Even the ceorl who had obtained five hides of land was entitled to promotion; and though our authority, Ingulphus, has been ranked among the Apocrypha of English

by him between the English and the Normans enabled each nation to give and take what was most suitable to its wants, without any of those artificial restrictions calculated to create jealousies and to divide them still further from each other.

From this period King William left no arts nor any degree of force unemployed to hold the people in subjection. And as if Heaven had not yet exhausted the vials of its wrath, the Scots made fresh incursions,—king Malcolm's peace was not that of "God," so strenuously insisted upon by William in his proclamations. He had rather the fear of the king than of Heaven before his eyes, and, having made spoil and prisoners, he hurried back into his mountain fastnesses.[6] So numerous were his captives that there was hardly a village or even house in Scotland which did not boast the possession of an English slave.[7] Unable to overtake him in his retreat, the king once more retraced his march into the south.

The vice of avarice appears to have grown upon William with length of years. Hearing that some of the English had concealed their money or plate in the monasteries, he ordered a strict search to be made, and confiscated to the Crown whatever his spies and agents

History, we, in this case, wish to believe, in the words of an old divine, "In apocryphis non omnia esse apocrypha."

[6] The possession of Cumberland for a long period by Malcolm, as a fief of the English crown, gave him immense advantages in making fresh incursions. William restored it fully to the British dominion. Shakspeare alludes to the fact of its possession by the Scotch king :—

> "We will establish our estate upon
> Our eldest Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
> The Prince of Cumberland."—Macbeth ; Vestig. Ang.

[7] R. Hoveden ; Ord. Vit. ; Walsingham ; W. of Malms. ; W. Pict.

could lay their hands upon. Even this was not done without the sanction and decree of the great council; which proves the respect in which William still professed to hold the laws. These great councils, therefore, in the words of a learned and distinguished writer,[8] were, very fortunately for posterity, never without their use or importance to the Norman kings; and they often called these extraordinary meetings. But again, to the more frequent recurrence of these special assemblages and consequently to the existence of a national council,[9] there was another circumstance very favourable. The crown was not transmitted as in France, for many centuries from son to son. Most of the Norman kings, in respect to hereditary right, were usurpers, as William II., Henry I., Stephen. Even Henry II. only obtained possession of the crown after a compromise. John again was a usurper; and even in the time of Henry II., Richard I., Henry III., the great councils were continually appealed to, from the circumstances in which these monarchs were placed.

In this manner, most happily for England, and indeed for mankind, this assembly still made, though not its regular yet its occasional appearance, and with sufficient frequency to maintain its place in the legislature. It was the policy of the Conqueror to ex-

[8] Professor Smythe, Lectures on Modern History, Pickering, London, 1840-1.

[9] Great councils were continued under William, as they had been in the reign of Edward the Confessor. Their origin and constitution are as uncertain as the periods when the people were first admitted to some share in the legislature. It is agreed by Coke, Spelman, Camden, Pryme, that the commons formed part of the great synod prior to the Conquest, but how they were summoned and what degree of power they possessed, is a matter of doubt.—Smythe; Hallam; Brodie; Alison; Lingard; Fortescue; Hale.

tinguish the allodial tenures, and to render all the proprietors of land vassals to the Crown. This, he at last effected; the great council was thus entirely altered, and came to consist of those only who held immediately under the Crown. With regard to the vague character of the particular laws of Edward to which the Conqueror professed his strict adherence, swearing to their maintenance upon those holy reliques he so successfully employed, the same writer[1] judiciously observes:—"It might be expected that Eadmerus, when he gives the history of the reign of William, would also have given us some account of this remarkable code. But, in the course of the history, the monk, with more than a monk's stupidity, instead of giving us these laws, observes that he forbears to mention what was promulgated by William with regard to secular matters. . . . . Our lawyers and antiquarians are therefore left to conclude that these celebrated laws of Edward the Confessor may now be imaged to us by what is called the common law of the land, or the unwritten collection of maxims and customs which are transmitted from lawyer to lawyer, and from age to age, and have obtained reception and usage among our courts and judges."[2]

Having completely suppressed the formidable insurrections which threatened the stability of his empire, William on his return deprived Cospatrick of the earldom of Northumberland, and bestowed it upon Waltheof, whose fatal marriage with his niece had been solemnised amidst the ruins of the city of York.[3] By this master-

[1] Professor Smythe, Lec. on Mod. History, lec. v. *passim*.

[2] Ibid. Notes to Lectures, &c., vol. i. p. 168.

[3] M. Paris; Ord. Vit. 521.

stroke of policy he at once conciliated the enmity of the English, and prepared the way for future confiscations, when he should have sufficiently enriched the earl in his new lieutenancy, at the expense of his subordinate vassals.

Having chastised the unruly Scots, William next planned an expedition against the Welsh, whose repeated incursions on the borders, since the reign of the Confessor, called for more energetic measures than the generals sent against them had yet employed. He led an army into Wales, drove them into their mountains, compelled their leaders to do homage, and received hostages for their future obedience and good faith.

All his declared enemies having been thus subdued, and deprived of the power of future resistance,[4] William had now time to direct his views towards Normandy. Not only had he reduced England to submission, but every ally that had successively appeared in her cause; the Danes, the Scotch, the Irish, and the Welsh. Their repeated expeditions, combined with the forces of the insurgent earls, had been rendered abortive by the military genius and statesmanlike talents of one man, with the resources only of a small state, the feudal grandees of which were but partially dependent upon the Crown. With the very limited and uncertain power he originally possessed, it required the most consummate ability to acquire, to consolidate, and extend the mighty dominion of which he was now the head.

By a system of gradual deprivation and confiscation he had merged the interests of the English nobles and clergy in the Crown; and his sole remaining cause of anxiety was the questionable allegiance of those

[4] "Quos viceris cave amicos tibi credas."—Curt. lib. vii.

Normans of every rank whom he had enriched at the expense of the nation. Hence he regarded with jealousy, not unmixed with alarm, his great vassals and the few English nobles whom he had not yet dared to strike. They were of the same high rank and ambitious character as those who had formerly betrayed him, and even laid snares for his life. How well founded were his fears, the events which were now fast approaching speedily declared. A confederacy was formed between the remaining heads of the nobility and the vassals of both countries, who in the fate of their predecessors seemed already to contemplate their own. The sense of common danger became too strong for national rivalry, and both nobility and people were beginning to amalgamate from an instinctive feeling of self-preservation against arbitrary and unlimited power.

The great dignities of the Church had been also subjected to the Crown by the most respectful and flattering demeanour towards the Holy See. The bishop and aldermen[5] were no longer shire-judges who divided the penalties and forfeitures with the king. He had clipped the wings of their temporal power, and confined them strictly within his newly defined limits, which bound them to maintain the canons and customs of their church, but not to go a step beyond. The new commission to inquire into the state of the monasteries and

[5] This title, of Saxon extraction, was at first applied to the peers of the land, but not to princes, sons of the kings, or heads of royalty. These *caldermen* ranked with the bishops in the Saxon laws, and had the government of counties, afterwards taking the name of earls; and their office had the same power and jurisdiction as that of the high sheriffs, with some additional privileges. The last title was written high-*gereves;* meaning head-governors, whence our modern word, *sheriff*, literally, the governor of a shire.

abbeys was conducted with a view to supply the funds for his intended Norman campaign. The mere rumour of this inquiry caused considerable treasures to be removed and concealed, and whenever these were found, they were instantly confiscated for the use of the Crown.[6] Some entire foundations he appropriated, took possession of the privileges of others, which he only consented to restore on the payment of a fixed sum; and not a few he put up to sale.[7] By means like these, many of his Norman and other foreign adventurers of low extraction displaced the more respectable English prelates of the land; and, with the clerical power, the free baronies which belonged to it were brought under his secular sway. He quartered both foreign priests and soldiers upon the old religious establishments, farms, and castles. These new proprietors acted also as spies, but, instead of receiving secret service money, they were bound to replenish the exchequer with the fruits of their own extortion.

William next extended his inquiry into the charters and privileges of cities, towns corporate, and other political bodies, refusing to continue or to renew them but on condition of large sums being paid down. Great part of the wealth of the nation was thus transferred into the public exchequer; and so impoverished were the English people, through all their corporate possessions and charitable foundations, that he no longer dreaded those outbreaks and insurrections of which the main resources were thus thoroughly cut off. When informed upon one occasion by some of his officers that "the

[6] Ang. Sac.; Monasticon; Vestig. Sacra; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.; Wace; Walsingham.

[7] Hayward; Abbé Prévost; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Walsingham.

people spake evil of him," his laconic reply was, "It is well that they can *do* me no evil."[8] He availed himself, however, of the information to deprive them of their arms; and in the words of one of his quaint biographers, "he brake the heart of their courage," before he again ventured out of the country. This he affected to justify on the ground of policy and experience, declaring "that he was not going to follow the example of the Dane who, having obtained England, lost it to his posterity by permitting the vanquished to retain their authority and estates."

The severity of William's new regulations, as far as the royal demesnes extended, proved the sincerity of these words; and a variety of horrible punishments, including mutilation for the slightest offences, especially against his forest regulations, were put in force. Nor only in the royal domains were the ancient laws rendered nugatory; for, by their extreme perversion, they were become throughout the entire country a mere dead letter. He had modelled his military code upon the example of Cæsar, who employed the Gauls to chastise the Germans, instead of attacking with his own Romans their strongholds in the Ardennes. William, in like manner, with Harold's countrymen defeated the sons of Harold, after they had overthrown Ednothus, the master of his horse. Thus, after the English had slain each other, he reaped the spoils of the victory with his Normans; and, on occasion of repressing the disturbances in Normandy, he invariably employed an army composed almost wholly of English. He took with him also the chief men of English descent, and placed them in the front of the battle, relying on their

[8] Ibid.

zeal for the honour of their country, and on their extreme hatred of their oppressors, to chastise the insolence of his refractory barons. Actuated by this policy, he enjoined a few of the leading English, like Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, to watch during his absence the proceedings of the Normans; and a serious revolt, headed by Fulk, Earl of Anjou, having just broken out in Normandy, he lost no time in carrying his arms into that country.

The English acquitted themselves with signal bravery, and the insurgents, as well as their turbulent neighbours, were soon reduced to sue for mercy.[9] It was the first time that William had employed the English on foreign service, and he was highly gratified with their good conduct. From this time he began to appreciate the military character of the people, and abated something of that national favouritism which he had so long displayed—a change of policy which gave greater stability to his power than all his previous acts of oppression. This improved feeling was not without its favourable influence also upon the nation, and thus it was that by slow degrees England began to assume that rank in the eyes of other powers to which its genius and resources entitled it. The Norman pride received a check; and the presence of an English army, which overawed the Norman enemies of their king, was viewed with strange sensations of jealousy, which soon gave occasion for its obtaining still higher reputation in its foreign campaigns.[1]

[9] Ord. Vit.; Chron. Sax.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Duchesne.

[1] Between 1072 and 1074, an interval of comparative tranquillity, which proved extremely favourable to the consolidation of William's power, both in England and his foreign possessions.

The ensuing period was spent in the enjoyment of the society of his consort and his family, from whom he had been for some time separated. He availed himself of this interval of tranquillity to confirm his relations with foreign powers, to promote his interests at the Papal court, and to regulate the internal affairs of his duchy.[2]

[2] William naturally concluded that he had nothing to fear on the side of England, after securing Waltheof in his interest by such magnificent favours, including the hand of the Conqueror's beautiful niece Judith. Earl Morcar was a prisoner, and the unhappy Edwin, his brother, had fallen a victim to the treachery of his own companion. He was proceeding from Ely on a mission to the King of Scotland, when his route was betrayed by three brothers in whom he had rashly confided, and he was slain with twenty of his followers by the Norman troops. "His death was passionately bewailed by the English. Even the stern nature of the Conqueror was melted into compassion, and he is said to have shed tears when the bleeding head of the young Saxon, with its long flowing hair, was presented to him by the traitors who had beguiled him into the ambush. Instead of conferring rewards on the murderers, William condemned them to perpetual exile.

"A singular curiosity was turned up by the plough, 1694, in a field near Sutton, in the Isle of Ely, where Edwin and Morcar are said to have met. It is a small shield of silver, about six inches long. On it was a Saxon inscription, which has been found to express that it had the double property of protecting the person who wore it, and the lover for whose sake it was worn. If it belonged to the young earl Edwin, it was perhaps a returned love-pledge from the betrothed princess."—Lives of the Queens of England, by Agnes Strickland, i. 65.

Ingram, the learned translator of the Saxon Chronicle, has given this Latin translation of the inscription. The following English version is subjoined, as being more close and literal than that which appears in Miss Strickland's work :—

"Edwinus me pignore dat ;
Illa, O Domine, Domine,
Eum semper defendat ;
Quæ me ad pectus suum gestat
Nisi illa me alienaverit
Sua sponte."

Me for a keepsake Edwin gave—
Grant this request, O Lord !
Him may she ever guard and save,
Who wears me on her heart ;
Unless she of her own accord
From me consent to part.

As this talisman was found where earl Edwin fell, or at least where he was

But it seemed as if he were destined never to sheath the sword. He was suddenly recalled to England by the rebellion of his Norman barons, a prelude only to the discord and unnatural violence which broke out among his own sons. Indignant at the favour shown by William to the Saxon Waltheof and his adherents, and the selection of English officers and soldiers for his expedition, they resolved no longer to submit to the severity of his feudal sovereignty, but to strike a decided blow. It was this extreme severity of discipline which rendered William's reign a continued succession of conspiracies and insurrections; one long war to establish his despotic usurpation. He had placed himself in direct opposition to the constitutional laws by which he affected to govern. The unsettled character of his institutions was produced by the same cause which had secured his easy triumph over those of the Anglo-Saxons, and by the absence of any real representative system. This cause, as it has been well remarked by Alison in his able and philosophical history, may be traced to the limited number of free inhabitants by which all the beneficent institutions of Alfred were blasted, and the English nation was exposed for so long a period to desolation and ruin from a small body of Northern invaders.[3] Roger, Earl of Hereford, son of the famous Fitzosborne, having promised the hand of his sister to Ralph de Guader, Earl of Norfolk, was stung to the quick by the king's refusal to consent to the marriage. Taking advantage of his absence, they disregarded the royal

last heard of, circumstances seem to say that he was in possession of it, and not the lady he loved, who had in all probability been forced to return it to him.—Ibid.

[3] Alison, Hist. of Europe, &c., Introd. i. p. 58; Turner's Anglo-Saxons, ii. 66.

veto, and invited their respective adherents to be present at the celebration of the nuptials, including the Saxon earl, who, besides being William's confidential adviser, had been presented by him with the three earldoms of Huntingdon, Northampton, and Northumberland. In evil hour Waltheof consented to attend, but whether to watch their proceedings, as he wished to make it appear, or as one of the confederated chiefs, does not seem to be proved.[4]

During the ensuing festivities, the malcontent earls, in descanting upon their presumed wrongs, declared that, if aided by the English, the Danes, and the Welsh, they would soon undertake to throw off the yoke of the bastard William.[5]

The English earl was prevailed upon for the moment to join their councils, but, as soon as the fumes of the marriage-feast had subsided, he began to view the matter in its true light, and upon his return his first resolution was to communicate the whole affair, with the expression of his repentance and regret that he had not at once acquainted the king with the extent of the conspiracy.[6] If he had indeed done so, he might have saved both his life and his honour, instead of signing his own death-warrant, by unfolding the whole to his treacherous consort. Having conceived an illicit attachment to another object, she lost no time in despatching a special messenger to her uncle describing her husband's conduct in the blackest colours.[7]

[4] Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit.; W. of Malms.; Rapin; Henry; Tyrrell; Knevett White.

[5] Saxon Annals; W. of Malms.; Halket; Brompton.

[6] Hume; Henry; Lingard.

[7] W. of Malms.; Walsingham; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Henry; Tyrrell; Lingard.

The next dilatory step taken by the earl was to consult the archbishop, Lanfranc, upon the conscientious scruples he entertained, under the seal of confession. That enlightened prelate, William's best friend and wisest counsellor, conjured him to hasten at once to Normandy, and throw himself upon the royal mercy. But previously informed, and deeply incensed against him, William refused to give him any credit for the sincerity of his contrition, and turned from him with a movement of extreme anger. He expressed the utmost indignation that his own nobles, men the highest in his favour and confidence, for whom he had made such sacrifices, even of his popularity and the best interests of the country, whose laws he had sworn to maintain, should seize the first opportunity to strike at his crown and life.

At the same time that he ordered the terrified earl into custody, his confederates rightly interpreting the motives of his flight, flew to arms, and were joined by the other malcontents, most of whom were Normans. But William's appearance in England, and his vigorous measures, wholly disconcerted them. The Earl of Hereford was defeated and taken prisoner; Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, was also routed by bishop Odo, who had been appointed regent of the kingdom. William then laid siege to his castle, where he had taken refuge with his lady and family. Alarmed at the idea of falling into the incensed monarch's hands, he contrived to make his escape by sea, and hastened to join the Danes. The Danish king assisted him with a considerable force, with which he hovered round the coast in the hope of making a descent and raising the siege;[8] but on hearing of

[8] W. of Malms.; Walsingham; Wace; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron de Nor.

William's success he took to his ships and returned to Denmark. His countess, however, a lady of high spirit, played the part of a heroine, and gave the monarch no inconsiderable annoyance.[9] She held the castle stoutly, animated the garrison, and appeared upon the walls. She was provided with everything for a long defence, and contrived to cut off not a few of William's veteran soldiers.

So far from appearing exasperated, the king was amused at the manœuvres of his fair adversary. An interchange of chivalrous missives, in which William was a great adept, ensued, with brave challenges, full of gaiety and mock defiance. All this, as in his earlier wars, seemed to take the fancy of the royal Norman for the moment. A passion for women was not one of William's foibles; but, excepting the imputation of bestowing occasional correction[1] upon his consort, he invariably treated them with respect and honour. He did not even chastise the refractory countess with his own hands, when she surrendered at discretion; but permitted her to depart and rejoin her husband, with the observation that he did not make war on ladies. But the heroine, like many of those upon whom the king had conferred favours, took a singular way of expressing her gratitude. For on hearing of his subsequent retreat from before the castle of Dol, on the continent, she exercised her wit upon the occasion, complimenting him upon the speed with which he ran; and assuring him that, had it not been for his

[9] Ord. Vit.; R. Hoveden, 434-5; Chron. Sax. 182-3; Prévost; Vie de Guilleaume, &c. ii. 90, 4.

[1] Neither little nor unfrequent, if we may believe some of the early historians, unless being rolled in the mire, being well thumped, and beaten with a bridle almost to death, and, it is even added, tied to the tail of a horse, be gentle castigation.—Ord. Vit.; Prévost.

excessive politeness to her, she would not have left him a single soldier alive to gratify his other enemies.[2] William, with apparent good humour, sent her a gallant reply, "applauding her courage, and regretting only that the English court should be deprived of a lady so well fitted to adorn it, through the base and treacherous conduct of her husband."

William had more than once occasion to exercise the same philosophic gallantry or patience, whichever it might be, towards some of the high-spirited and resolute of the sex whose orders militated against his own. Several of the Norman dames, indignant at the protracted absence of their lords, sent very peremptory commands for their instant return. More than one obeyed, preserving their allegiance to the ladies at the expense of that due to the sovereign—such was the case of the Earl of Grentemesnil, whose lady appears to have imbibed an inveterate dislike to her sovereign. She defamed him loudly in his absence, excited his Normans to revolt, and sought to create discord in the Conqueror's family, by the unscrupulous circulation of rumours that he had actually made attempts upon her own virtue.[3] The Conqueror's enemies eagerly propagated these vile calumnies, which extended almost to every country in Europe.

The mother of Harold is said to have taken especial pleasure in aiding the Norman dames in the dissemination of these derogatory reports. She sent a full budget of them to Sweno, King of Denmark, and, among the rest, she averred that the tyrant had not

[2] Prévost, ii. 93.

[3] Ord. Vit.; Henderson; Prévost; W. of Malms.; Saxon Annals; Brompton; Rapin; Henry; Lingard.

hesitated to commit any crime which administered to the least of his gratifications; that he had actually dishonoured a young lady, the daughter of one of the canons of Canterbury,[4] and the niece of a Kentish nobleman, who had in consequence joined the recent insurrection. This improbable story is asserted to have reached the ears of queen Matilda, and to have produced a very serious domestic misunderstanding, one of the first which had ever arisen between the royal pair. Seeking, with a deep-rooted love of revenge, an opportunity to wreak her jealousy on the presumed object of William's passion, it was not long before the unfortunate lady fell into her power. The account, as handed down to us,[5] is that the canon's daughter was inhumanly put to death by the secret orders of Matilda, after every trace of her beauty had been as far as possible obliterated. The Conqueror is there described as having been seized with such a transport of rage on learning the barbarous vengeance taken by his consort, that, on his return to Normandy, he had recourse to his favourite mode of chastisement. This was with a bridle, which he used to such purpose that his consort died shortly afterwards.[6]

The king, with equal wisdom and magnanimity, took no measures to punish the authors of these absurd tales. From the time of the death of Earl Edwin, on the other hand, his policy towards the chief insurgents was rather of a conciliatory character. He had bestowed on that formidable conspirator, Edric the Forester, a responsible office near his own person. The traitor

[4] W. of Malms. ; Ord. Vit.

[5] Rapin ; Hearne ; Cottonian MSS. ; Robert of Gloucester.

[6] Unfortunately for the credibility of the Lady of Grentemesnil, who originated these calumnies, Queen Matilda is said to have survived ten years after she received this curious infliction of matrimonial discipline.

Cospatrick had been made Earl of Gloucester, and was employed in the Scotch wars. Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, who had joined the malcontents, and attempted to surprise the castle of Dover, he restored to his honours, and treated with the utmost regard.

He was satisfied with committing to prison the two powerful rebels, Waltheof, son of earl Siward and Earl of Northumberland, and Fitzosborne, Earl of Hereford. Edgar Atheling, the assumed cause of all the conspiracies, who had fled into Scotland, and who often appeared in arms against him, he repeatedly forgave and restored to honour and favour, though the undisputed heir of the line of Saxon kings. He attended the Conqueror at his court at Caen, in 1074, and was not only pardoned for all past transgressions, but pensioned with a daily allowance of a pound of silver,[7] and treated with every distinction due to his rank as the head of the English nobility. Subsequently, at his own request, he was handsomely equipped by William for the Holy Wars, in which he joined the Emperors of Germany and Greece, and acquired a fair reputation among the first crusaders. After his return he was also allowed a pension of twenty shillings a day, in addition to several lucrative offices in the country; where he is said "to have mellowed to a good old age in pleasure and vacancy of affairs, preferring safe subjection before ambitious rule, accompanied both with danger and disquiet."[8]

[7] Saxon Annals; Brompton; W. of Malmsbury.

[8] Hayward, Life of K. William I.

CHAPTER VII.

King William proclaims an amnesty—Proceeds against the rebel chiefs—Acts of the council—Waltheof, the Saxon earl, condemned to die—Treachery of his consort Judith—National sympathy displayed—Petitions in his favour—Justice of the sentence considered—Tried by old Saxon laws—Ratified by the Council—Execution of the English earl—Forfeiture of his estates—The Norman barons—Condemned to imprisonment—Trial by their peers—*Curia regis*—Unsettled state of England—National characteristics—False position of the king—Sufferings of the people—Character of the Norman and Anglo-Saxon governments—Norman life and manners—Heroic and feudal institutes—Orders and fraternities—Field sports—Fashions—Style of dress—Handsome mansions—Camp and court of the Conqueror—Baronial seats—Splendid establishments—Prelatic pride and pomp—Warrior bishops—Knights and gentry—Norman soldiers—Indomitable pride and ruthless turbulence—The two people compared—The king and queen revisit Normandy—Abbey of Fescamp—The Earl of Norfolk—William in Brittany—Is compelled to retreat—Anxious for repose—New enemies—His own household—Scene between the king and his consort—Quarrels of his sons—Robert flies from court—Raises the standard of revolt—Powerfully supported—Distressing scenes—Open war—Hostile encounters—William wounded by his son—His English army repulsed—Alarm and grief of the queen—She mediates a peace between the father and son—And between the brothers—The Conqueror returns to England—Accompanied by Robert—War with the Scots—Robert leads an army against them—Founds Newcastle—Anecdotes of William and his court—Devotes himself to national works—Character of his feudal government—Different from that of France and other countries—Anglo-Saxon laws—Papal authority in England—Centralization system—State councils—The court of Rome—Luxury of the Normans—Dainty viands—Style of living—Amusements of the court—Of the barons and knights—Military assemblies—Reviews, &c.—Theatre—Games—Superstitions—Goblins—Fortune-tellers—Legends and traditions.

King William had once more arrived in England during the autumn of 1074. He found public tranquillity

perfectly restored by the vigilance and activity of bishop Odo and his advisers. This did not render him either supine or confident: the embers of revolt were smothered but not extinguished in the breasts of his great Norman barons. He had proclaimed an act of amnesty for the insurgents; but this was not general. The Earl of Hereford[9] was held a close prisoner: many of his English adherents of inferior rank were put to death, and recourse was even had to the barbarous punishment of mutilation.[1]

In the case of the Earl of Northumberland, also, related by marriage to William, a variety of motives combined to urge the king to drive matters to extremity; the chief of which was his desire of adding to the demesne of the Crown. It was as easy for him to procure an act of condemnation, as to issue an amnesty; and though the unfortunate earl had revealed the conspiracy, and been engaged in no overt act of treason, while the rebel Normans received a lenient punishment, the English earl was finally condemned to suffer death. The possession of immense wealth was, doubtless, his real crime, not less in the eyes of William than in those of his treacherous and abandoned niece. He was equally obnoxious to the Norman courtiers; but so sensible was the monarch of the injustice of the

[9] Induced by the recollection of this bold Norman's services, as well as those of his father, it is supposed that the Conqueror would gladly have set him at liberty, if he had expressed his repentance and sued for grace. As an earnest of his favour, William is said to have sent him a richly embroidered robe, which the earl in a fit of passion threw into the fire. Highly incensed at this contempt of his favours, William, with his usual bitter imprecation, vowed that he should remain in prison during his life; and he kept his word.—Ord. Vit.; Henry; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Vestigia Ang.

[1] Ibid.

sentence, that he retained him prisoner some time before he yielded to the savage importunities of the earl's wife. This artful and infamous woman, with some other Norman dames, too nearly resembling her, presented a striking contrast to the modest, unobtrusive qualities of the Saxon ladies of rank, especially those of the royal blood.[2] The Norman Judith and her intriguing partisans, like the lady of Grentemesnil, no inactive politicians of their day, were more intent upon dividing the spoils of the unhappy earl, than using the slightest influence to avert his fate. From the English ladies of rank, on the contrary, even those wedded to Norman lords, the petitions to the throne for mercy, in person, by deputies, and by letter, were innumerable and incessant, especially before the warrant for his death was signed.

The English nobility and clergy, such at least as remained, were not less zealous, while the Normans who had attempted to decoy him into their snares, indignant at his having discovered their treachery, joined the lady Judith and her party in encouraging William to pursue him to the death. The agitation throughout the capital and the country was extreme, when the royal will was made known; for to put to

[2] The sisters of Edgar Atheling, and their relatives and descendants, were generally patterns of female excellence, piety, and unassuming worth. They displayed nothing of that demoniac spirit of cruelty and vengeance which so frequently inspired queen Matilda and her Norman ladies, and others of French or foreign blood. It was just, therefore, that the female Saxon line should be restored to the throne, to the great and universal joy of the English. Editha, widow of Edward the Confessor, died at the close of this year (1074). She was interred by the side of her consort, in Westminster. Algith, the widow of Harold, long survived her sister-in-law, and passed the rest of her days in obscurity.

death an enemy in cold blood was, at that period, esteemed an offence and an insult against society and its prevailing ideas of public justice. No law then disguised its cool atrocity; and the crime consisted not in that act of bearing arms, which has since been dignified with the name of high treason, but in the illegality and injustice of a lord paramount formally putting to death one of his vassals, not in open combat, for presuming to appear in arms against him. The same rule applied to the monarch and his subjects: and in the feudal code, bad as in some respects it was, we nowhere find that bearing arms openly, or, in other words, what was afterwards described as high treason, was imputed as a crime deserving of death. The offence of William, therefore, against the usages, if not the admitted laws, of feudality and custom, was the more reprehensible; for there was no existing Norman law, much less any common law emanating from a grand council, to authorise him in putting the Earl of Northumberland to death. And granting even that it did,[3] the blackness of the deed is not in the slightest degree relieved; for it would not then have been even judicial murder, inasmuch as the unfortunate nobleman had not incurred the penalty of appearing in arms against his superior lord in this instance. On the contrary, he had received a free pardon for having done so on a former occasion, and, instead of suffering any penalties, had been promoted to the first offices in the State.

The example of capital punishment, moreover, begun by William, was followed by the most lamentable consequences, both to the Norman princes themselves and

[3] It was by an old Saxon law that Waltheof was tried and condemned.

to the nobility and the people. It brutalised their disposition, and ensanguined their laws, affording a fatal precedent for succeeding monarchs to imbrue their hands in the blood of the most innocent as well as the noblest of the land, nay, in that of their nearest relatives; breaking through the most solemn compacts and the most sacred ties, by punishing with death every look, word, or act, which they chose to interpret amiss. This sanguinary principle, once admitted, reached its fatal climax in the reign of our eighth Henry, when the bare idea of compassing the death of a king, if it could be dragged to light, became a capital crime—called high treason.

One of the first martyrs to this new royal doctrine, on the 29th of April 1075, the earl was conducted from his prison to a rising ground near the gates of Winchester, and there fell almost the last of the Anglo-Saxon nobles upon a Norman scaffold.

The earl's death was bitterly deplored by his countrymen of all ranks.[4] Nor was it long before King William's injustice and ingratitude recoiled upon his own head. Discord, misconduct, duplicity, and, in short, high treason in abundance, sprung up in the bosom of the new lawgiver's own family; including even the treason of a consort whom he had so ardently loved, and in whom he had so implicitly confided.

The shameless life, also, of William's niece, the adulterous and sanguinary Judith; the luxurious excesses and tyranny of his uterine brother Odo, with the increasing violence and rapacity of his great vassals in the abuse of their feudal privileges, from the pressure of the

[4] Ord. Vit. 536, 7; W. of Malms.; Henry; Lingard; Hume.

chain upon themselves, naturally excited uneasy if not remorseful feelings in the breast of the king.

Still William retained some great and magnanimous qualities, some enlightened views of the national interest and honour, in his relations with other states, as well as in his civil judicature, military regulations, and great public works. These were adapted in some measure to redeem his oppressive rule, and entitle him to the reputation acquired by every strong-minded and high-spirited sovereign, the honour and safety of whose kingdom are guaranteed by his own lofty ambition, confidence, and self-respect.

There are also historians, it is just to state, who have attributed the sufferings of the English rather to imperious circumstances, to the peculiar position of William, and the necessary system of which he formed only a subservient part, than to his own despotic temper, his errors, or his crimes: a system, moreover, which, like his own character, contained much both of good and evil, calling forth the proudest energies of men, yet sullied with all the tyranny and excesses inseparable from their conduct, when placed in high but not duly responsible situations of command.

There were besides a vast number of inferior vassals, of subordinate authorities and agents, over whom he could exercise no immediate control.[5] This, however,

[5] Many have esteemed as advantages those courtesies and chivalric manners, and that taste for refinement and magnificence, which serve to elevate the character and pursuits of a people. The national edifices became more substantial and elegant. The learning of the clergy was infinitely more respectable a short time after the Conquest. These improvements were probably owing to the more free intercourse with France, and the closer dependence upon Rome which the Conquest produced; though the happiness of the people could be little promoted by the theo-

forms no justification of William's conduct any more than of his weakness, in giving the reins to the atrocious passions of his niece, and to the avaricious and revengeful spirit of his consort or of his own direct vassals. The centre of a system of military sway, the harsh discipline and gradations of which merged the noblest virtues and the greatest qualities in its fearful course, William was himself the sport of circumstances, and could neither direct nor control their power. The criminality of attempting to fix it by force upon a people whom he affected to govern by law, yet by law to violate the constitution he had sworn to maintain, must ever rest upon the head of the Norman Conqueror. That he did this with the consent of the "great council" or parliament of the nation, then also a court of criminal judicature, rather aggravates than offers any extenuation of his guilt. That the great Norman barons, the Earls of Norfolk and Hereford, who had levied war against him, were tried in the *curia regis* by their peers, the "*proceres regni*," and deprived of their estates, was only a mockery of justice in a tribunal where the king's influence was supreme.[6]

The vices of avarice and revenge, the two great failings in William's character, were brought into fatal promi-

logical reputation of Lanfranc and Anselm. The chief benefit, next to that of a vigilant police, was the security they found from invasion on the side of Denmark and Norway. The organisation of a feudal militia deterred those predatory armies, which had brought such repeated calamities upon England.—Hallam, Middle Ages, ii. 167, 8.

[6] The Earl of Hereford appeared before the court, and was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The Earl of Norfolk was sentenced to exile. Earl Waltheof was tried in the same court, most probably according to the old Anglo-Saxon law, of which William availed himself to put him to death.—Ord. Vit. ap. Mazeres; Edin. Review, vol. xxvi.

nence[7] by the action of such a system;[8] a system, as established in England, into which no government, however enlightened, no free laws, neither love of justice nor generosity, could infuse many alleviations.[9] In maturer age also, it tended to bring the Conqueror's worst qualities, aggravated by the avarice and ambition of his family and his court, into more startling display. He had begun to shed the blood of his nobles, as well as of his people, an example not lost upon his successors. That fatal moral Rubicon once passed, there is no retreat for monarchs more than for other "men of blood;" and, by the slaughter and destruction of their people, they whet their appetite for the lives of their wives, their children, and the most faithful of their friends and servants. It was the unhappy tendencies of a bad system, acting upon men of violent passions, which rendered the lives of the Norman monarchs an incessant source of turbulence—one continued sanguinary career.

Many of the Anglo-Saxon reigns had been long and peaceful, when not disturbed by foreign invasion, up to their close; the elements of sovereign power harmonised with the character and the usages of the people; and

[7] His exactions, both feudal and in the way of tallage from his burgesses and the tenants of his vassals, were almost as violent as his confiscations.....He let his crown lands at the highest rate to farm, little caring how much the cultivators were racked by his tenants.—Hallam, Middle Ages, vol. ii. 164; Saxon Annals.

[8] In England the feudal system can hardly be thought to have existed in a complete state before the Conquest.—Ibid.

[9] The breaking up of the old laws of succession and of the equal distribution of property in favour of primogeniture, hereditary descent, and the monopoly and accumulation of land and wealth into masses, was, pre-eminently, the work of William and of his successors, and the cause of public calamities not yet brought to a close.

hence the unceasing clamour of that people for the restoration of their ancient laws—a clamour yet far from being appeased. It was different with the Normans and their feudal sway, which succeeded in sweeping before it the more calm, steady, and self-balanced government of the Anglo-Saxons, the no distant descendants of those free Germans described to us in such glowing colours by Tacitus. Such a government, once established, as it was in England, was purely of a defensive character: it was enough for it to mature its plans, and occupy itself with the self-subsisting power of its internal administration, without any views of foreign aggression—a comparative stranger to the feudal and adventurous spirit animating the institutions of almost every European state, and the daring and aggressive power of which was admirably represented in the genius of William and his restless Normans. Such a genius, wielding the feudal heroism of Europe, was more than a match for an established aristocratic monarchy, however powerful, with only a limited portion of general freedom, as under the Anglo-Saxons.[1] For it must not be forgotten that the majority of the people were serfs. The two nations, moreover, were very opposite both in character and manners, and in some respects, as we have shown, the Saxons were the more estimable and free from prevailing vices. They seemed to exemplify in their distinctive features the singular doctrine of universal attack and resistance, as expounded by the great Cuvier; so ill were the elements of national cha-

[1] It has been said, perhaps by their enemies, that the Saxon people had a sovereign contempt for literature, holding it as a notable maxim, that a boy who dreaded the rod of a pedagogue behind him, would never be able to face an enemy before.—Vestigia Ang. i.

racter in both adapted to harmonise or amalgamate; and so incessantly did they contend, defy, and resist a merging of interests during a period of almost a century and a half. The English were serious, energetic, endowed with great passive and resisting courage, but not active; with little genius for plotting, or acting on any regular and combined plans, in which William and his people so much excelled. The Normans, on the other hand, were a cheerful, witty, and vivacious people,[2] delighting extremely in what may be termed practical jokes, and by some people innocent frolics and convivial jocularity.[3]

So fond, indeed, were the old Normans, when once accustomed to the refinements of the South, of engaging in "the keen encounter of the wits," as already shown in the wars of William, that the greatest enemies, in the very heat of a siege, sometimes suspended their hostilities, in order to engage in a less dangerous combat of repartee. When one of the contending parties gave this challenge, he appeared arrayed in white, the acknowledged livery of peace,[7] and the opposite of the red ensign, denoting the hue of brute battle and of blood. The Normans were also a more economical people, and lived at less expense, as well as with more elegance, than the English. They had the greatest reverence for the laws of feudal chivalry; the honour of knighthood was then an object of ambition to the greatest princes. The noblest began their career in

[2] It is supposed that the rich and liberal grants for which the Norman dukes, and William in a less degree, were so celebrated, were always made out, like that to his Norman huntsman, in more convivial hours when avarice and judgment slept. [3] Henry, vol. iii. 571.

[4] Ord. Vit. 789; Hichesii Thesaur. t. i. præfat. 17-18.

this feudal school as pages or valets.[5] Names now appropriated to domestic servants were then often given to the sons and brothers of kings.[6] They were next advanced to the more honourable rank of esquires, admitted into more familiar intercourse with the knights and ladies of the court, and perfected in dancing, riding, fencing, hawking, hunting, tilting, and other popular exercises, the accomplishments of the day.

Soon the courts of kings, princes, and barons became colleges of chivalry, as the universities of arts and science. Many of the young nobility, before knighthood, adventured from the king's court, and from the houses of bishops, earls, and barons, to make trial of their strength and skill in arms. At length, the signal was given, and the sports began. The youths, divided into opposite bands, encountered each other; some fled, others pursued, and sometimes the one party was made to overtake and put the other to the rout.[7]

Not unfrequently, from the rude or refined sports pursued in early life, brotherhoods and societies were formed, which became distinguished in European annals, and some of which exist to this day. Soldiers, knights, or vassals, before strangers to each other, would become what is termed "sworn brothers,"[8] shared the same dangers, and divided equally all their possessions.

Thus, when King William, after the Conquest, granted the two great honours of Oxford and St. Waleries to Robert d'Oyley, the latter immediately

[5] Mémoire sur l'ancienne Chevalerie, par M. de Sainte Palaye.

[6] Les Mœurs des François, par Le Gendre, 63 ; Henry, Hist. of Great Britain.

[7] Stephaned Descript. Lond. à J. Sparke, edit. 1713, 7, 8.

[8] Du Cange, Gloss. Voc. *Fratres Conjuncti.*

bestowed one of them on his sworn brother, Roger d'Ivery.[9] In Wales and other parts this custom frequently led to the most deadly feuds, each of the great families, with whom a royal scion had been brought up, endeavouring with all their power to raise "their sworn brother" and favourite prince to the government.[1]

Devotion towards the ladies was esteemed by the Normans among the most indispensable qualifications of a true and gentle knight. In this school of chivalry the youth were carefully instructed in the arts of love and all the nicest rules and punctilioes of a virtuous and honourable gallantry.[2]

The Anglo-Normans invariably selected the fair objects of their devotion in the same courts where they were brought up. Upon these they lavished all their vows, and often, with rather more sincerity, all their money, to give greater zest to their newly-acquired arts of pleasing.[3]

The serious preparations connected with receiving the honour of knighthood were more imposing even than those introductory to free-masonry at any period. They had their peculiar noviciate, rigid discipline, services, and most singular penances, too numerous to dilate upon. But for men of spirit no institution could be better adapted to excite the ardour of the young, whether nobles or commoners, and for acquiring the accomplishments necessary to obtain an honour courted by the greatest monarchs.[4]

Such an institution necessarily led to the more general adoption of the use of surnames, chiefly from

[9] Kennett's Parochial Antiquities, p. 57.

[1] Girald. Cam. Ap. Ang. Sacra, ii. 490.

[2] Mémoires sur la Chevalerie, &c. part i. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

the date of the Conquest. Like family arms, they were at first confined to persons of rank, as we may perceive from the Conqueror's rolls, or of newly-acquired fortune, who assumed their surnames from their castles or their estates.[5]

Hence the great coincidence between those of so many noble families in England, with several towns, castles, and estates in Normandy, France, and Flanders, whose possessors retained the same names subsequently to their settlement here at the Conquest. It was not till some time afterwards that surnames were generally assumed by the people. Individuals were designated merely from some quality, office, or occupation; and sometimes from personal peculiarities, as the Black, the White, the Long, the Strong, the Swift, the Lightfoot or the Heavyside; by which kings also were occasionally distinguished, as Edmund Ironside, Harold Harefoot, &c.[6]

Contemporary with the camp and court of William was likewise introduced a more magnificent and splendid style of living, with a greater regard to state, dignity, and elegance. The English nobles were thought to be too much addicted to feasting and drinking, and spent their ample revenues[7] in comparatively mean and lowly dwellings. The Conqueror, on the other hand, brought a taste for stately edifices, both public and private, and for more costly tables, splendid dress, and elegant equipages.[8] William's own hunting seats and great vassal farms were almost innumerable; many of his great barons held counties as well as castles; the

[5] Camden's Remains, &c. [6] Vestigia Ang. c. 8; Henry, vol. ii. 563.
[7] W. of Malms. l. iii. p. 57, col. 2; Henry, vol. iii. 565; Ord. Vit.; Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie. [8] Ibid.

Earl of Shrewsbury nearly the whole of Salop, and the Earl of Chester all the rich and powerful districts in Cheshire.

Nor were the establishments of his great prelates upon a scale of power less extended and grand, combining, as they did, both temporal and spiritual dignities. Bishop Odo had immense possessions in different counties, and Longchamps, Bishop of Ely, had 1500 horsemen to form his retinue, while his open house and table exhibited all the abundance and luxury that art or nature could supply,[9] every delicacy that a Roman emperor or pontiff could have desired.

The Conqueror set the example for this studied magnificence and show, by his stated progresses and the royal feasts which he held at the recurring seasons of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide; as if preparatory to ushering in the dawn of the gorgeous tournament, the holy festivals, and the magnificent array of the first crusades.[1]

Still the interior of this gay, chivalric, and truly baronial life, could lay claim to few of the polished refinements, or even the accommodations, enjoyed by the middle ranks in modern times. Several estates, for instance, were held in England upon the tenure of finding clean *straw* for the King's dormitory, and *litter* for his rooms, as often as he had occasion to lodge out of his own residences.[2] Even at a subsequent period it is alluded to, as a proof of the growth of luxurious manners, in the case of Thomas à Becket, "that he

J. Brompt. 1793; Benedict. Abbas, 70, 1; Anglia Sacra, t. i. 407.;

[1] M. Paris, p. 108; Le Gendre, 88.

[2] Blount's Fragmenta Antiquitatis, 28; Camden's Britan. i. 311 Henry, vol. iii. 567.

commanded his servants to cover the floor of his dining room with clean straw or hay every morning in winter; with fresh bulrushes and branches of trees every day in summer; that such of the knights and small gentry as came to dine with him, and could not find room on the benches, might sit upon the floor comfortably, without spoiling their clothes."[3]

Unquestionable valour, combined with studied prudence and fraud, was the chief characteristic of the Norman soldier, and it might be added, of the church militant as well. We have seen how William, who was certainly no vain boaster, addressed his army; modestly assuring them that they were the greatest of mortals, when he wanted to call forth all their energies. But, whatever were their other vices, the Normans were free from the revolting disguises of cant and hypocrisy; they called things by their right names; and when they trampled upon the English, and extorted from them the last doit, they did not insult them by assuring them that it was all meant for their good. They treated them as the last of human wretches, "slaves of the slave and lowest of the low," because they had no stake in the property of the country, nothing but what was subject to Norman imposts; and no wonder that the name of Englishman became a reproach, and that he was called what he was, when he existed only as the property-slave of the Norman tax-man.

With regard to ignorance of the true nature and objects of government, and of their rights as men and as citizens, the Normans were inferior to the people whom they had conquered. It was the superiority of brute force,

[3] W. Stephaned. 14; Observations on the Statutes, 116; Du Cange, Gloss. Voc. *Igastiquem.*

which, when overthrown at the close of a century and a half, changed only its name, not its oppressive character, and instead of one tyrant became a legion, and sought to perpetuate its slavery by legislative enactments.

In respect to manners, likewise, the Normans, though more polished and advanced, according to the received ideas of feudal civilisation, were more barbarous in a really social and political point of view. The vicious and unhappy position in which the two people stood towards each other had of itself a deteriorating influence, and, besides the vices imported, brought some of the worst passions into display.

It is not surprising therefore that we cannot speak of the Norman manners in England with commendation. "It would be highly improper," in the words of a learned historian,[4] "to stain the pages of history with proofs and examples on this subject, which might easily be produced." Of the corruption of public manners it will probably be thought sufficient evidence that stews were established by law in England, and that ladies of pleasure who followed the camps and courts were formed into regular incorporations, and placed under the government of officers called their mareschals.[5] These great offices had estates annexed to them, which, like other property obtained upon no less exceptionable terms, were made hereditary in the chief families. The king was himself perhaps one of the most sagacious farmers of taxes and public economists of Europe. He converted even the vices of his subjects into a source

[4] Henry, Hist. of England, iii. 178.

[5] Stowe's Survey, ii. 7; Blount's Fragmenta Antiquitatis, 8, 80, 82, 85, 126.

of private emolument; and was assuredly the most powerful if not the most politic monarch of his age. Yet he was only the head of the legion; earls, barons, sheriffs, judges, and foresters without number, played the petty despots in their several districts. But they failed to inspire the respect, or rather the fear, everywhere felt at the approach of their deep-sighted and invincible master. Could they once have freed themselves from the bondage of his ruling genius, character, and authority, the English at this period would soon have shaken off the Norman yoke.

For some time before the Conqueror's death, the state of England is described by contemporary historians as wretched and degraded in the extreme. The Normans, even by their own admission, had fully executed the wrath of Heaven upon the English. There was hardly one of that people left intrusted with any degree of power; they were all involved in one general servitude and sorrow.[6]

In the year 1075, William and his consort held their court at Fescamp, where they celebrated the Easter festival with great magnificence, attended by many princes and the nobility of the surrounding states, to witness the august ceremony of the profession of the princess Cicely their eldest daughter, at the venerable abbey of the same name.[7] She was there veiled a nun by the hand of the Archbishop John, and consecrated to the holy and indivisible Trinity, under the tutelage of the

[6] Stowe's Survey, ii. 7; Blount's Fragmenta Antiquitatis, 8, 80, 82, 85, 126.

[7] The Abbey of Fescamp was founded by Richard II. of Normandy, called the Good. It was his favourite residence, and that of his successors, including the Conqueror, on his visits to the continent.—Wace; Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie.

noble abbess Matilda. Educated in the convent of Caen, she had early imbibed the prevailing doctrine of devotional seclusion. She was highly accomplished, and, being as deeply versed in secular learning as in the legends of the monks, was not without ambition, and adopted the strictest rules which the existing conventual discipline would allow. She consequently succeeded the venerable abbess in her office, after a period of nearly fifteen years, discharged the sacred functions with credit, and was distinguished for charity, piety, and wisdom.

William was frequently compelled to revisit Normandy, to repress the unruly and intriguing disposition of his great barons, who were continually plotting with the neighbouring princes[8] or with the French king. Early again in 1076 he pursued the Earl of Norfolk into Brittany, where he besieged him in the city of Dol. He vowed with his customary oath not to quit the spot till he had seized the person of the traitor, and chastised all the abettors of his attempt. For once, however, the king was compelled to break his impious vow. He had, almost for the first time, formed a wrong estimate of the power and activity of his enemies. The young Duke, Alan Fergeant, in conjunction with the King of France, joined the earl's party, and came to his relief with a powerful army. Listening only to the dictates of revenge, William continued to push the siege. A long series of uninterrupted successes had taught him to underrate the resources of his enemies. Passion usurped the place of judgment; and, at the eleventh hour, being too weak to meet his new enemies, he was

[8] Histoire de Normandie ; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. ; W. Pict.; W. of Malms.; Henry ; Tyrrell ; Lingard ; Hume.

compelled to decamp, when on the point of success, with the additional mortification of leaving all his tents and baggage in the hands of his enemies. To a monarch so devotedly fond of money and of glory, the loss of a city's spoils, of the money-ransom of the earl's life, and at least £30,000 sterling with his baggage, made up no slight reverse—to say nothing of the Amazon countess's philippics upon the occasion.

This sudden check appears to have operated favourably upon all parties; a peace was the result, to cement which King William bestowed the hand of his daughter Constance upon the Duke of Brittany. This union was mutually advantageous, and much more politic than attempting at all hazards to wreak his revenge. The marriage rites were celebrated with great magnificence, and the young bride carried with her a noble dower, being no less than the lands of Chester, formerly in possession of earl Edwin, who had been promised the hand of one of the princess's sisters.[9]

In fact, King William appears to have been at length wearied with a series of perpetually recurring wars, and desirous of courting repose. That which he might before have secured was now denied to him, and in a manner which must have given redoubled poignancy to his regrets. He had reduced his subjects to a hollow peace; he was no longer annoyed by his nobles, nor by his neighbours; but a nearer and a more formidable enemy sprung up in the bosom of his own family. He found that his maxim "to divide and rule" was here no longer applicable. Division here was the "house divided against itself;" and the bitter dissensions of his

[9] W. of Malms.; Sim. Dunelm; Chron. Sax.; Ord. Vit. 544; Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Henry; Tyrrell; Lingard; Hume.

sons were aggravated by the weak and treacherous conduct of his consort. Favouritism, at once the product and the curse of prosperity, had struck its baneful roots deep into the passions both of William and of his queen. Robert, her first-born, was the idolised child of his mother; William II., afterwards called Rufus, had obtained the confidence and good opinion of the king his father, and, having received the honour of knighthood both from the royal hand and that of an archbishop, accompanied the Conqueror in all his latter campaigns.

There can be little doubt that these family enmities, the last and most fruitful source of misery, considerably abridged the days of the queen, who died of a broken heart, when in her fifty-second year. And it is equally evident that the violent passions of William, gaining additional force after that event, ultimately led to his own sudden and premature decease.

Some allusion to the causes of these bitter feuds will render the narrative both more intelligible and more interesting. Not long after the conquest of England, Robert had been declared heir to his father's continental dominions. When of age, he was also to have possession of Maine during his father's life; and he now claimed the performance of that promise. He had also been united with queen Matilda in the regency of Normandy, and, indulged by her to a fault, was permitted to receive the flattery as well as the homage of all ranks, and to assume the airs of an independent sovereign.[1]

When called upon to render back the delegated power, to show the duty of a son and the obedience of a subject, he murmured and pressed his demands for the

[1] Ord. Vit.; W. of Malms.; Annals of Normandy; Robert of Gloucester.

territory of Maine. William at first delayed, and next pointedly refused to accede to his request. Many painful discussions took place, in which the queen advocated the cause of her son, which, as regarded Maine, was certainly just, though it afforded no excuse to Robert for flying to arms. But to all representations made in his son's behalf, William invariably gave the brief reply: "I am not going to pull my clothes off before I go to bed." Aware doubtless of Robert's weakness and wretched incapacity, he very properly refused to entrust him with a separate dominion, though he held the lands of Maine in right of his son's marriage-contract with the daughter of the last earl, Herbert, who had died in her infancy.[2] The royal quarrel was naturally taken up by the junior branches of the family, and, as is usual in such instances, became the source of other disputes. His brothers William and Henry seem to have been in the habit of ridiculing the pretensions of the vain-minded heir, and an open rupture among them was the inevitable consequence.

The king was spending part of the year 1076 in the castle of L'Aigle, with his court. A love of practical jesting, especially with crowned heads, is always dangerous, unless perhaps, as customary in olden days, in the licensed person of a fool. To the brothers of prince Robert it had very nearly proved fatal; and certainly the throwing a pail of filthy water upon the head of an elder brother, as he is passing under the window, is no slight cause of provocation,[3] or undeserving of chastisement. In an instant the castle was in an uproar; Robert rushed with his drawn sword up the staircase to inflict public vengeance upon the perpetrators of a

[2] Chron. Sax. 183; Ord. Vit. 544; Henry; Lingard. [3] Ibid.

wanton and public insult. Fortunately, the king himself heard the disturbance, and hastened to the spot; for nothing but his presence could have averted some fearful catastrophe:[4] and the drawn swords of the father and the son, as they nearly crossed each other, seemed like the shadow of the encounter which soon afterwards threatened to terminate in the supreme crime of parricide itself.

Jealous of the partiality displayed by his father, the wrath of Robert knew no bounds; and, with the fatal precipitancy which formed part of his character, he resolved upon the impulse of the moment to rise in rebellion against his own father and declare his independence. The same evening he withdrew from the court, attended by a number of the young nobility, and even made an attempt to surprise the town of Rouen. The king issued instant orders to seize Robert and his companions wherever they might be found. Some were taken; but Robert, with a few other rebels, was received into the castle of Hugh de Neufchatel. Numbers of the Norman nobility soon joined the standard of Robert, and from this period war may be said to have been declared—a war which was carried on with the utmost implacability for a space of almost three years.[5]

The young nobles of Maine and Anjou, all the wild enterprising spirits burning for fresh adventure, the lovers of pleasure and of spoil, flocked to the standard of the rebel prince, as their sires had done to that of William himself upon occasion of his memorable invasion of England. Far from regarding the bonds of

[4] W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; W. Pict.

[5] M.e Paris, 7; Ord. Vit. 545; R. Hoveden, 262; Hume; Henry; Lingard.

duty or allegiance, they rushed to the field with clamorous joy, to attack the veteran hero in the scene of his early fame—his beloved Normandy. But they soon found to their cost that he was not yet so aged as to brook either rival or master.[6]

The Norman historians attempt to exonerate queen Matilda from the charge of having abetted her son in his traitorous conduct, or supplied him with the means of rebellion. The number of opposing contemporary authorities, however, added to the extreme devotion she always manifested to his interest, lead us to a different conclusion; though it is certain that, after the mischief was done, she was extremely anxious, like other people, to share the blame of it with her friends. Alarmed at the dread appeal to arms, and the appalling picture of hostile fields steeped in kindred blood, the distracted wife and mother now began to feel some of the pains and penalties attached to a royal state, and sought by every effort to avert the impending storm.[7]

She threw herself at William's feet, and conjured him to see his erring son; and she then besought Robert, in language the most passionate and pathetic, not to refuse to listen to the terms intended to be proposed; but to hasten to her, and hear them. Robert consented to an interview with his father, at which the queen was present; and a most painful one it must have been to each of the unhappy parties. The feelings of the father were lost in those of the monarch; while Robert was as far from entertaining the natural affection or respecting the duty of a son. Aware that he was popular, he assumed a bold tone, reminded William of his promises, and

[6] M. Paris, 7; Ord. Vit. 545; R. Hoveden, 262; Hume; Henry; Lingard. [7] Walsingham; Hemingford; Ord. Vit.

required to be put in possession both of Normandy and Maine. The king sternly rebuked him, asserted his unfitness to govern them, and reminding him of the fate of Absalom, exhorted him not to listen to evil counsellors, who would lure him to his ruin. Robert replied that he had not come to hear homilies with which he had long been sickened by his tutors, but to claim the rights to which he was entitled. "I want a direct answer. Are not these things my right?" "So long as I live," was the Conqueror's reply, "I will neither give up my native dominion of Normandy, nor share it with another; for is it not written that 'every kingdom divided against itself shall become desolate?'[8] I won England by my own good sword; the vicars of Christ placed the diadem of its former kings upon my head, and the sceptre in my hand, and I vow that not all the world combined shall compel me to make over my power to any one. Is it to be borne that he who is bound to show the duty of a son should dare to become my rival in my own realm?" "Then if it is inconvenient for you," was the scornful answer, "to keep your own promise, I will retire and seek justice from strangers; for here, as a subject, I will no longer remain." In vain the wretched queen appealed to both with remonstrances and with tears. The misguided prince rushed from their presence, and, with a large body of adherents, among whom were many of the disaffected nobles, set out for Flanders, and found a new scene for his treacherous intrigues at the court of the earl, his uncle, surnamed Le Frison.

The French king did all in his power to widen the breach, and stir up the new confederacy against his for-

[8] S. Dunelm; Ord. Vit.; P. Daniel.

midable neighbour. Robert was in no want of allies to carry on the war. Such was the extent of the conspiracy as to enable him to draw large sums from Normandy itself, and both the great vassals and the queen were supposed to hold secret correspondence with him and to promote his views. William, aware that disaffection was fast spreading on all sides, lost no time in sending for reinforcements from England, commanded by the most trustworthy of his old leaders.[9] The insurgents were already in the field; but he soon convinced them that the lion whose talons they had proposed to clip, had lost none of his former spirit, nor was yet too aged to range the forest without a rival. Driving the rebel army before him, he entered France, and instantly laid siege to the castle of Gerberoy, which Robert and his adherents had resolved to defend to the last moment.

It was during the ensuing campaign that another and still more painful scene took place between the Conqueror and his misguided consort, whose fatal fondness for her eldest son received no check by his appearance in arms against his own father. She had the imprudence to supply him with large sums of money, and, when these were exhausted, she had recourse to her most precious robes and jewels, presents from her deluded husband, to support his extravagant and violent conduct.[1]

It was impossible that such infatuation should long escape the observation of those around her. It reached the ears of her colleague in the regency, and president

[9] Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Kennett; Henry; Lingard.
[1] W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; W. Pict.

of the Norman council, the aged Roger de Beaumont, whose fidelity to William permitted him not to withhold it for a moment from his master's knowledge. We may imagine the surprise and indignation of the monarch, who had not only shown the most unlimited confidence in her truth and honour, but placed her in the highest dignity, the most responsible situation, next to his own, which she could fill, as the regent of Normandy. It was a cruel blow; and for some time he refused to give credit to the representations made to him by his old and faithful minister. He was too soon undeceived by the surprise of one of the agents employed in this traitorous correspondence, named Sampson, who bore "the damning proofs" of the queen's guilt upon his person.[2]

The usual pride and sternness of William's character appear to have given way to his feelings of grief and regret upon this confirmation of his worst fears. The lordly ambition of the sovereign was sunk for the moment in the bitter reflections of the injured husband and the father. The very expressions of which he made use show the depth and the intensity of the pain he felt, without the slightest mitigation as in former instances, of meditated vengeance and retaliation. On the contrary, he seemed, for the first time, to bend under the stroke, and to look upon it as on some predestined evil for which there was no remedy. There was also a mildness in his rebuke, foreign to his nature, which must have struck his faithless queen to the heart. "I find, madam," he said, "that the maxim of a certain philosopher is quite true, for my case, unfortunately,

[2] W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; W. Pict.

is too apt an illustration of it, not to confess its force :— 'Naufragium rerum est mulier malefida marito.'[3]—Such a woman is the ruin of her own house; and how have I deserved it from you? Could you have met with one more constant, more faithfully devoted in his attachment to you? Yet the wife of my bosom, she whom I prized as my own soul, whom I placed at the head of my government, the guardian of my treasures, of all that was mine in the world, she has betrayed me, and placed all she could command at the disposal of my most cruel and unnatural enemy. She has succoured him, enriched him upon the spoils of her husband, and maintained his cause in secret with a zeal and cunning that has made him formidable.[4] Have I deserved it?"

This calm and magnanimous appeal, instead of awakening sentiments of contrition, which should have thrown her at the feet of the offended father and the betrayed monarch, seems only to have encouraged Matilda to take advantage of it, and to make a bold and artful defence. She cautiously avoided meeting these direct charges, and so far from replying to his questions, she put others in her turn, and had recourse to pleas of maternal affection and to tears. "Alas, my lord, ought you to be surprised that a mother's feelings for her first-born son should take precedence of the sterner dictates of justice, and harsher duties? For I protest to you, by the God above us, that, if my dear Robert were dead, I would gladly pay the price of my blood to restore him to life for a single instant. Nay, there is no suffering or sacrifice I would not willingly undergo for his sake; dangers from which the natural weakness

[3] "The woman who betrays her husband brings ruin upon his affairs."

[4] Walsingham; Ord. Vit.; W. Pict.

of my sex would otherwise make me shrink with terror. Could you yourself, my lord, be so harsh as to require of me, surrounded with the comforts and the luxuries of my state, that I should not succour to the utmost extent of my power that dear son, when I knew that he was pining in straits and difficulties, nay, perhaps, in absolute suffering and privation. Far be such hardness from a parent's heart; nor ought you, my lord, to think of imposing such a task upon the tenderness of a mother, whose sole fault is entire devotion to the happiness and interests of our first-born son."

This evidence of extreme weakness and infatuation, if sincere, was enough to have disarmed the anger of the sternest tyrant; such as William never was in his private and domestic relations. It must have convinced him that the case was hopeless; that an affection so indulged renders a woman no longer mistress of her actions; and that all reasoning or argument must be thrown away upon her. But, while he restrained his passion from breaking forth, or inflicting punishment, he is said[5] to have turned pale and trembled with ill-dissembled rage upon thus hearing from her own lips the extent of his consort's folly and daring disregard of all her paramount duties, by which he had been involved in almost inextricable difficulties. He was not inclined therefore to show any forbearance to the subordinate actors in the plot, who, on receiving private intimation from the queen, fled on all sides. Several of them took sanctuary in the monasteries; and the good abbots, at Matilda's suggestion, found it necessary to have them instantly shaven, shorn, and professed as monks, before the vengeance of William could overtake them.

[5] Ord. Vit.; Walsingham.

Meanwhile Robert had strengthened his positions, and received such considerable accession of forces from different points as enabled him to make fierce and destructive sorties upon the besiegers. Many bold feats of arms were performed before the walls; and so great were the number of challenges and knightly encounters, in addition to the regular sallies, that the siege is described as resembling a grand tournament rather than a common field of battle.[6] The Conqueror is known to have taken singular delight in this species of warfare, for the very obvious reason that he had never met with his equal: and he now as sedulously courted the toil and peril of the fight as he had done in earlier years, not reflecting perhaps that great generals, like other men, however fortunate in youth and manhood, may calculate upon the rebuffs of fortune in keeping the field too long. His army had already suffered a reverse; and his personal prowess was now for the first time doomed to receive a like check. It must have added poignancy to his anger that such an indignity was reserved for him from the hand of his own son. That son now confronted his warlike father boldly in the open plain. His powerful garrison had grown into an army, notwithstanding the efforts of William to prevent it; and a general action took place near the castle, in the field of Archembraye. The Conqueror's army consisted chiefly of English, and he was accompanied by his son William, both no less eager than confident, and bent upon chastising the presumption of the young heir. They knew that he was chivalrously brave; but William had greatly underrated his son's talents as a general.

[6] Ord. Vit.; Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Hist. de Nor.; Walsingham.

The battle was maintained with great obstinacy on both sides; Robert's army, however, composed of the flower of the Norman nobility and knighthood, was more select and experienced, and made several terrific charges upon the English infantry. Each commander displayed the utmost resources of his genius. Robert, at the head of a large body of horse, having overthrown the first ranks, and ridden through the bowmen, took William's reserve, where he commanded in person, both in flank and rear, and a desperate struggle ensued: it was maintained hand to hand with equal prowess by both parties.

But the main body of the English fought under every disadvantage; and the veteran hero vainly attempted to restore order among their broken ranks. Calling aloud, he threw himself into the thick of the *mêlée*, where he observed a knight, armed at all points, who carried fresh confusion into his ranks wherever he appeared. He wore his vizor down; and, not recognising each other in the fierce affray, the father and the son met in the desperate charge, and the unnatural combat was fought hand to hand. Robert, at length, after wounding his father through the sword arm, unhorsed him;[7] and, falling heavily, the Conqueror of England ran serious risk of being trampled to death.

The rebellious son, however, was spared this consummation of his crime. The voice of the King was recognised, and Robert was among the first who hurried to the assistance of his sire, the weight of whose armour rendered him helpless, and raised him from the ground. He had heard that angry voice too often to mistake it; and now, seized with a sudden pang of remorse, he

[7] By some writers it is added that he also slew William's horse.

threw himself at his parent's feet, and expressed his sorrow for the accident. William, irritated at his double defeat, and smarting with the pain of his wound, instead of forgiving, or accepting the submission of his son, pronounced a fearful malediction, and, hastily remounting his horse, rejoined his discomfited troops.[8]

Fortunately, this painful event led to a suspension of arms. Robert, deeply shocked, paused in his wicked and infatuated career. William Rufus, as well as his father, had been grievously wounded; and the more moderate and well-disposed of both parties, alarmed at the progress of this unnatural war, hastened to the camp of William, eager to arrange the preliminaries of peace. They found the King engaged in making fresh preparations, bent upon chastising the insolence of his son; and it required all the tears and entreaties of his unhappy consort to prevail on him to receive the proffered submission of the conscience-stricken prince.[9]

From the moment of the dreadful encounter, which had so nearly made her favourite son a parricide, the guilt of which must in great part have rested upon her head, the queen had bitterly reproached herself, and her health rapidly declined. This was the strongest appeal that could be made to the feelings of the Conqueror, who, upon reflection also, could hardly have been displeased at the pre-eminent valour and generalship of his eldest son; qualities which naturally tended to raise him in the opinion of so warlike a monarch. William had always sufficient magnanimity to admire heroism, though displayed against himself; more especially when it accorded with his own interests to pardon and gain over the hero to his own views. This policy

[8] M. Paris, 7; Ord. Vit. 572, 3.

[9] R. Hoveden, 262.

he now adopted, while he had the additional satisfaction of staunching the bitter tears shed by the repentant wife and mother, who, by the tenderest expressions of gratitude and maternal delight, gave the best assurance of her future conduct to her liege-lord, by whom she was still tenderly beloved.

The reflection, moreover, could not escape them, that the same event which seemed, as by the hand of Providence, to arrest so fatal and unnatural a war in its mid career, might, with greater probability, have converted the father into the murderer of his first-born son;—a result that would not only have broken the heart of the mother, but shorn the splendid feats of the Conqueror of half their lustre, and rendered him justly odious in the eyes of posterity. It was under no common circumstances, therefore, that, having withdrawn his troops from France, and occupied his former positions, he wrote to Robert a letter with his own hand, accompanied by one from the queen, both expressive of their wishes for a perfect reconciliation, and despatched it by a special and confidential messenger. The King invited him to repair without delay to Rouen, where he might rely upon a full and free pardon and a cordial welcome from the queen and from himself. He was assured that he might count upon everything being done for him, which the affection of a father could concede consistently with his duty as a monarch.[1]

Robert, whose bosom was torn by contending emotions, was highly delighted at receiving these assurances from the hand of the King. Though passionate and resentful, he was warm-hearted, generous, and ever open to the first offers of reconciliation. Throwing

[1] Ord. Vit.; Prévost; Henderson; R. Hoveden; Hayward.

himself with perfect confidence upon the honour and good-feeling of his father, he instantly set out, with only three attendants, for Rouen, where he was received with the most gratifying marks of affection, as well as esteem, both by his parents and by his brothers, the last of whom regarded him with far more respect since the occurrence of the battle of Archimbraye. There is no doubt that, had he possessed judgment equal to the ardour of his feelings, and known how to take advantage of his present position, history would have recorded another tale of his future fortunes.

But, with many amiable and lofty qualities, Robert had no stedfastness of purpose, and was liable to the most dangerous influences, both from his natural fickleness and the designs of those around him. His father saw his character clearly, when he declared that he was a foolish knave who must be well whipt by Fortune before he was brought to a due sense of his errors.[2] With this knowledge of his son's weakness and virtues, William was now induced to attempt to reclaim him, and to reconcile him with his brothers, by adopting less harsh measures, and placing him in a situation due to his rank, and in which he might distinguish himself. This he had soon an opportunity of doing, upon being recalled to England, in 1078, by serious disturbances in the North and a fresh invasion of the Scots. Instead of re-investing him and his mother with the regency of Normandy, he wisely took him, along with his family, to the English court. Having summoned a military council, it was concluded that Robert should be placed at the head of an army destined to oppose king Malcolm on the borders, and retaliate upon him the

[2] Ord. Vit.; Henderson; Prévost; Walsingham.

depredations he had committed upon the inhabitants.[3] Walcher, Bishop of Durham and Earl of Northumberland, had been also cruelly slain with his attendants at Gateshead,[4] by the adherents of Leolf, an English noble, who had been previously assassinated by two of the bishop's favourites.[5]

It was in the course of this expedition, which, owing to the inferiority of his force, added little to Robert's reputation, that he built, by direction of his father, a strong castle near the spot where the bishop was killed. This received the name of New Castle, and was the origin of our great modern town of that name, as well as the model of other new castles and new towns in various parts of the country, which still retain the designations bestowed upon their old Norman neighbours, like that upon the Tyne.[6]

The formidable attitude assumed by the King led Malcolm to offer overtures of peace, which were accepted. Thus, by his prompt and active measures, William soon restored tranquillity throughout his dominions, as he had done in his own family. In conjunction with his queen and some of the most learned and enlightened prelates of his time, he had paid great attention to the progress of architecture and the construction of many public works, in addition to the royal residences at Westminster, Windsor, the Tower, Bermondsey, Berkhamstead, and the great abbeys of England, founded upon the model of those in Normandy.[7]

[3] R. Hoveden, 262. [4] Chron. Sax. 184.

[5] Named Leothwin and Gillebert ; S. Dunelm, col. 48.

[6] R. Hoveden, 263.

[7] A great number of religious houses were also founded in Normandy by the old English nobility.—Ducarel, Nor. Antiq.

Other great projects connected with the naval and military power of England were also matured; and it was already becoming evident that the character, laws, and institutions of the ascendant party, though in the act of exercising conquest and oppression, would at no distant period be merged in those of the subjugated nation. The subsequent wars between England and Normandy bore testimony to this truth, one so hopeful and cheering to the destiny of vanquished countries, in which a superior intellectual and moral power will invariably at last assert its just pre-eminence.

It was only for a short period that, while the forms of liberty and the letter of the Anglo-Saxon laws continued in force, a virtual despotism was established. We are told, for instance, that the Wittenagemote, from its origin and nature, had always decided on peace and war. But when its members became vassals of the Crown, their military service was due to their lord whenever required; and the justice or wisdom of the contest was no longer any part of their concern. The important prerogative of declaring peace and war was thus at once transferred to the Crown, and with the Crown it has ever since remained.[8]

According to the charter of William, it would appear[9] as if his object was to separate the ecclesiastical laws from the secular courts. But he did not exclude the ecclesiastical judge from secular jurisdiction. On the contrary, he prohibited the sheriff from calling any into judgment *sine justitiâ Episcopi*, without the authority of

[8] Smythe, Lecture v. 154, 5.

[9] Duchesne; Hist. Nor. Scrip.; Liber Ruber Scaccarii; which contains many valuable treatises on the *infeudatories militum*, and the certificates returned by all the prelates and barons of England.

the episcopal judge. Notwithstanding the separation of the two courts, the interposition of the ecclesiastical judge in secular causes was so far from being interdicted that, unless he were present, the actual proceedings would be without the sanction of the law. In fact, therefore, the separation of the ecclesiastical judge was rather the result of the subsequent papal prohibitions, restraining ecclesiastics from interfering in the temporal judicatures.[1]

In some of the Anglo-Saxon laws, as amended by William, a marked distinction is made between the Normans and the English in the award of strict justice. Thus if a Frenchman accused an Englishman of perjury, homicide, or other capital offence, the latter was to acquit himself by duel, with the privilege of buying a champion, or if inferior, by fire ordeal; but if an Englishman accused a Frenchman, and would prove it by judgment or duel, the law willed that the Frenchman should acquit himself by oath only, and not by duel or fire.[2]

Nor was this all. Though the inferior courts of justice continued the exercise of their functions with little alteration, the separation of the spiritual from the temporal power, which William introduced in the county courts, was a serious evil. The reputation of these tribunals thus declining, their business was usurped by the King's justiciaries, and the practitioners of the *Aula Regis*, being Norman ecclesiastics, introduced that spirit of chicane, subtlety, and delay, which in a great measure is still the reproach of English law, especially in what are called courts of equity.[3] This may perhaps bring to the

[1] Wilkins, Ang. Sax. Laws, 219, *et seq.*

[2] Ibid. 231; Quarterly Review; Gent. Magazine.

[3] Vestigia Ang. i. 224.

reader's mind the amusing verses of our Cowper, when, speaking of England in these early days, in the first part of his "Expostulation," he presents so graphic a picture of the condition of the people:—[4]

> "Then priests with bulls, and briefs, and shaven crowns,
> And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,
> Legates and delegates, with powers from hell,
> Though heavenly in pretension, fleec'd thee well.
> And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,
> Some twigs of the old scourge are left behind—"[5]

which twigs, the poet slily adds, in a note, "may be found at Doctors' Commons;" and it might be again rejoined, not there only.

It is wonderful how, under such a system, the English character and customs should have successfully resisted the tide of Norman innovation of every kind, and even thrown it back upon the victors, till their laws became assimilated, and their institutions merged in those of the conquered. This political phenomenon, however, is well explained in a work full of profound historic truths, of grand, ennobling views, and sentiments as beautiful as they are benevolent;[6] establishing at the same time the heart-cheering fact, that out of apparent evils are evolved new elements of regeneration and final good. "It is the general spirit and habits of thinking," says this philosophic historian, "in a community that are all in all. Charters, and statutes, and judges, and courts of law, are of no avail for perpetuating a constitution, or even for securing the regular administration

[4] Among the minor grievances of William's reign, was the introduction of the Jews, to whom the King assigned a place to inhabit and occupy.—Vest. Ang.

[5] Vol. i. "Expostulation."

[6] Smythe, Lectures on Modern History, lecture v., England.

of its blessings from time to time, if a vital principle does not animate the mass, and if there be not sufficient intelligence and spirit in the community to be anxious about its own happiness and dignity, its laws and government, and those provisions and forms in both which are favourable to its liberties."[7]

This was precisely the animating principle which gave birth to that unconquerable spirit of passive resistance, which first laid the foundations and still preserves entire the structure of our English liberties. It was this which now repelled the repeated efforts of William so to modify the Anglo-Saxon laws and institutes as to render them compatible with the continental despotism, imposed so heavily upon the masses of every nation, in the form of the new feudal government.

We must not at the same time be unjust to the Conqueror's merits as a firm, intrepid ruler, who, by his strict police and municipal regulations, liad the foundation of internal order, and by his naval and military armaments freed England from the invasions[8] which had so long ravaged her richest provinces, and rendered her independent of the aid of foreign nations. Not a few also of the most obnoxious laws which bore his name were really of Anglo-Saxon growth and origin.[9]

[7] Smythe, Lectures on Modern History, lecture v., England.

[8] Alison; Brodie; Hallam; Lingard.

[9] A manuscript, formerly belonging to Archbishop Parker, and afterwards to Coke, and which preserves the greater part of the text of the laws repeated in Ingulphus, has recently been discovered among the literary remains at Holkham, and from this last-mentioned document the following extracts have been made :—"Cez sunt les leis et les custumes que li reis Will grantad al pople de Engleterre apres le cunquest de la terre; iceles meimes que li reis Edward sun cusin tint devant lui. Ceo est a saver :—Pais à seint Iglise; de quel forfeit que hom fet oust,

It was thus with regard to the feudal burdens alleged to have been imposed by him upon the clergy. It is well known that under the Saxon government church lands were bound to furnish their contingent of troops, unless exempted by special charter. That William was not the author of this grievance, as it was loudly proclaimed,[1] the privilege granted by Edgar to the monks of Winchester is sufficient proof. So far were the Saxon ecclesiastics from being unconcerned spectators of their country's wars, that many of their clergy took up arms in its defence, and perished in battle against its enemies.[2]

In a practical point of view, doubtless, whatever was the acknowledged theory of the old Anglo-Saxon laws, all the consequences usually attendant upon a military conquest were for a time experienced. The vast and complicated chain of feudalism was rivetted upon the

e il poust venir a seint Iglise, oust pais de vie et de membre. E si aucuns meist mein en celui ki la mere Iglise requereit si ceo fust u evesque u abeie, u iglise de religiun, rendist ceo qu'il aureit pris e cent souz le forfeit. E de mere iglise de parosse xx souz, et de chapele x souz. E ki enfreint pais le Rei, en Merchene, lahe cent souz les amendes. Autresi de hemfore e de agwait purpense."

Such, if we can believe Ingulphus, are the laws of the Conqueror, in the very idiom in which they were promulgated, and according to the copy brought by him from London. That the substance of the statute is authentic may be admitted. But the employment of the French language, contrary to the usage and practice of the eleventh century, is calculated to awaken suspicion. We cannot refer the French text of the laws to any higher period than the early part of the reign of Henry III., which also appears to be the era of the Holkham manuscript. (See Quarterly Review, xxxiv. 261.)

These laws were written in the dialect of the Roman Walloon, and offer the most ancient specimen of it. There is also the book of Brut and Wace's antique romance of *Rollo*, called *Roman de Rou*.

[1] M. Paris. [2] Eadmer, Chron. Sax.

necks of the people; its energies were gone, its liberties were to be re-conquered. With the aid of Norman jurisprudence, a sanguinary criminal code, which to a recent date disgraced our statutes, was then promulgated, and paved the way for the exercise of a despotic power by succeeding sovereigns over the lives both of the nobles and of the people; a power often as cruelly wreaked upon the members of their own families, even upon their wives and children. In civil judicature, also, the Norman forms, processes, and technicalities appear to have laid a broad foundation for the tyranny of the ecclesiastical courts,[3] and for the interminable litigations of a modern court of Chancery. It must be admitted, also, that William, without yielding to its supremacy, certainly augmented the papal authority in England, leaving to his successors a legacy of strife, which brought blood upon the head of the first Plantagenet, compelling him to do penance, as a lowly and repentant sinner, at the shrine of his former favourite, Thomas à Becket. His policy in so far tended to raise the ecclesiastical power, at the expense both of the sovereign and the people, the latter of whom were subjected to a spiritual thraldom, which operated as a tax far more serious than that of the Peter-pence; though

[3] The early Saxon kings had resisted the encroachments of Rome more successfully than their Norman successors. In a letter from Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, to Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, he exhorts "his good brother to prevent pilgrimage to Rome; especially of the English ladies, for that it frequently had happened that they lost by the way what they could never again recover—their virtue."

It is aptly remarked that these so called "ladies" perhaps counted upon a plenary remission of their sins, when they arrived at their journey's end, and conceived that there could be no great harm in adding a little to the number.—Vestigia Ang. i. 94.

it was by no means regarded as so heinous an offence as his patronage of the Jews.[4]

It is a singular fact that, in all the risings of the nobles and the people during the Conqueror's reign, the avowed object was the restoration of the people's charter—as the great bulwark of their liberties, through the medium of a virtual representative system—such as was supposed to have existed under their Anglo-Saxon kings, and formed the only guarantee for the national rights and privileges. It was in truth an effort to return to first principles, to the simple and free system of self-government, or the more perfect representation of all, as established in the old Germanic confederations, and first transplanted by the Saxons into England.

Nor was it without examples, both in sacred and profane history, on which to found its claims to general national support. The councils of Nice and Antioch had exhibited perfect models of a universal system of representation.[5]

Thus, to the other blessings which civilisation owes to Christianity, is to be added the support of those inestimable advantages which have flowed from the establishment of the representative system.[6] Is it surprising, then, that nobles and people should so soon have learned to unite, and toiled so hard to oppose a military system of centralisation and irresponsibility, sought to be established by the Conqueror, as the supreme head both of the Church and the State? It was this union which, as early as William's reign,

[4] Vestigia Ang. i. 225.

[5] Alison, Introduction to Modern Hist. of Europe, vol. i. p. 46; Salvandy, Histoire de la Pologne.

[6] Ibid.

offered the sole alleviation of the grinding feudal oppression, the deep-seated and wide-spread evils of the Conquest.[7]

It is evident that, from the year 1078 almost to the close of his reign, his uniform aim was to concentrate the power of the government, by loading the great baronial fiefs with money-tax and military service. The great barons sought compensation by re-granting portions of land so burdened to their knights, and so on to the knights' vassals. The same services, with increased taxes, were required, under heavier penalties, to be rendered in peace and in war, in proportion to the nearer approach to the termination of the feudal chain.

In addition to his crown lands, the king now held upwards of seven hundred chief baronies, vassals of the Crown, and sixty thousand in knight fee, or vassals of the great lords. No Englishmen, however, stood in the first class, esteeming themselves fortunate, indeed, to rank in the second, too happy to have the protection of some great Norman chief, and to be permitted to strengthen the dominion of William, upon what he esteemed that firm and immovable basis.[8]

But no efforts could extend a systematic despotism over the hearts of the old English yeomen,[9] who soon

[7] Mazeres ; Lyttleton ; Sir W. Temple ; Russel ; Mackintosh ; Lingard ; Henry.

[8] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. ; Chron. de Nor. ; Prévost ; Henderson ; Henry ; Mackintosh ; Lingard ; Russel.

[9] One defeat could not extinguish the recollection of a hundred victories. Habits, the growth of ages, survived the oppression of transient sovereigns. The power of the Normans prevented them from rising into the higher stations in society ; the slaves already filled the lowest ranks of life. Between the two they formed a sturdy and powerful body, which

began to clamour for their former laws and usages, becoming, from a combination of trying circumstances, only more resolute and united. Formidable ranks of young rising freemen, growing up under the sheltering wing of a feudal aristocracy, soon returned the boon by enabling their lords to restrain the headlong passions and impetuosity of the kings.[1] These boldly opened the way to the rights of the middle classes, fast springing into life from England's ocean towns, as if at the magic spell of free trade, and a commercial intercourse unfettered as the winds that bore it.[2]

With the same object of concentrating all state influence, honours, and dignities, as far as possible, in the Crown, King William summoned another council to confirm his former decrees, and to render the ecclesiastical state, its powers, and constitution, more completely subject to the existing feudal laws. The English clergy, and much more the great prelates, were become almost extinct, or occupied the most subordinate offices. All the great sees and church preferments of every kind had been lavished upon Normans or other foreigners. Soon, even the new Norman clergy took the alarm; for they were compelled to show their titles—an admirable expedient for raising an ecclesiastical tax. They were again called upon to furnish military service, or to pay

neither withered in the contests of feudal power nor perished in the obscurity of ignoble bondage. It is from this cause that the yeomanry of England took their rise.—Alison; Hist. of Europe, i. 18.

[1] Hallam; Smythe; Brodie; Alison; Russel.

[2] In the words of the able and noble-hearted author of the Lectures on Modern History, "it is the spirit of the people that is all in all. When driven from thrones and altars, truth, freedom, and religion still find a sanctuary in the bosom of the lowliest of God's people."

the penalty of contumacy, like their lay-brethren of corresponding rank.[3]

William's subjugation of the clergy was at length complete; but he had still to battle for the right of investitures, and to deny, if possible without offending, the supremacy of the Pope. The Norman prelates inveighed bitterly against what they termed his innovations, only another name for absolute servitude, and like "the groans of the Britons appealing to the Romans," they had recourse with mingled tears and revilings to the justice of his Holiness in behalf of their old privileges. The monarch, however, once a submissive suitor, had now less occasion to show the same deference and respect: he no longer made costly presents, but quietly persevered in exercising his royal prerogative and replenishing his exchequer. With a powerful army and police at his beck, and a vassal aristocracy wholly depending upon his will, he awed superstition itself into silence, and met the complaints of his friend the primate and Archbishop of Canterbuy with perfect serenity and *sang-froid*. Nay, he even expressed pleasure at the arrival of the Papal legate, the Bishop of Sion, the first ever seen in England. With the adroitness of a consummate politician, he gave him a hearty welcome to his court, and contrived to turn a circumstance that might have told against him to the most happy account.

With a show of apparent awe and submission to the representative of the vicegerent of Heaven, William also took care to summon a council at Winchester, where, availing himself of the countenance of the legate, he

[3] Henry; Hume; Lingard.

finally degraded Stigand from his rank, conferring his shorn honours upon his old friend and minister Lanfranc, abbot of St. Stephen at Caen. Other obnoxious prelates, including all those who had complained to the Pope, were at the same time removed. So that, while openly deferring to the Papal court, which had already begun to exercise an ascendency in England, not easily shaken off, William made use of it in subjecting his clergy more completely to his arbitrary rule, and placing them wholly upon a level with the rest of his subjects. Having proceeded so far, his next royal edict forbade the recognition of the sovereign pontiff by any party not first authorised by himself. He required that in all cases the decisions of the different councils should be submitted to his examination, and derive their authority only from his special ratification of them.

It was not in the power of Rome to issue censures or fulminations of any kind in his dominions till they had received the royal sanction. By assuming this high position, becoming a supreme pontiff and absolute ruler, rather than a limited monarch, William's wary conduct proved that he could have reflected as great splendour upon the Papal chair as upon the throne. For while he held both the ecclesiastical and civil states subject to his royal prerogative, his policy tended to keep them distinct, and to draw that distinction wider.[4]

The same efforts to subject the Anglo-Saxon church, its laws and customs, to his more arbitrary Norman rule, were made by all the subordinate agents of William's power. This spirit of innovation gave rise to many

[4] Mazeres ; Henry ; Lingard ; Brodie ; Hist. de Nor. ; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. ; Hallam ; Mackintosh.

serious and some ludicrous conflicts between the English monks and their Norman superiors, who had displaced the heads of the Anglo-Saxon abbeys and monasteries. Often was the battle of the respective church privileges and special discipline fought upon holy ground, with all the obstinacy and more than the acrimony of the field of Hastings itself. An occurrence which took place at Glastonbury[5] showed how far the genius of discord must have inspired the councils of the Anglo-Norman church, and made "the lord of misrule" the only lord paramount throughout the great church fiefs, for such they really were, from the chief sees to the most humble foundations in the land.

The frequent conflicts of the monks, towards the close of William's reign, might have furnished the satiric wits of some Norman Pope or Boileau with an admirable subject for his pen, in which the bold abbot Thurstan might have figured with all the *éclat* of a Belinda, or the "Prior's desk" itself. William's doughty abbot seems to have been very difficult to please; for we are told that the monks meant well to him, beseeching him that he would govern them rightly, and love them, and that they would be faithful and obedient in return to him. The abbot, however, would hear nothing of this, but "evil-entreated them, and threatened them worse." So one day the abbot went into the chapter-house, and inveighed against the monks sharply. Nay, he attempted to mislead them in the service by teaching them a new-fangled chant brought from Fescamp in Normandy, instead of that to which they had been accustomed, and which is called the Gregorian chant. Afterwards he sent some laymen, and they came full

[5] A.D. 1083; Chron. Sax. 236.

armed into the chapter-house right upon the monks. Then were the monks very much afraid[6] of them, and wist not what they were to do. But they shot forward, and some ran into the church and locked the doors as fast as possible behind them. Still their persecutors held them in chase; broke into the minster, and resolved to drag them out, so that they durst not stir nor issue forth. A rueful thing happened that same day. The Frenchmen burst into the choir and hurled their weapons towards the altar, where the monks were. Nay, some of the knights went upon the upper floor and shot their arrows downward incessantly towards the sanctuary, so that on the crucifix that stood above the altar they stuck many arrows. There the wretched monks lay about the altar, and some crept under and earnestly called upon God, imploring his mercy, since they could not obtain any at the hands of man. What can we say, but that they continued to shoot their arrows, whilst the others broke down the doors, and came in, and slew some of the monks and wounded many more therein. So that soon the blood came from the altar upon the steps, and from the steps on the floor. Three there were slain to death, and eighteen wounded at the least.[7]

Nor was this summary mode of introducing Norman customs and usages confined to the heads of the clergy. William's great vassals and other lay lords were as much dreaded by the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts. The English clergy, indeed, drew up a form of prayer

[6] Literally, "afeard of them;" terrified by their somewhat sharp mode of conversion to the new-fangled church. "Afeard" occurs frequently in Shakspeare; "afraid," I believe, only once.

[7] William I. Chron. Sax.; Ingram's Tran. p. 286.

for the people to offer up every evening when they shut their doors and windows, that they might be preserved during the night from the visitation of the Normans.[8]

This inveterate hostility between the two people continued for upwards of a century after the Conquest. The two languages were kept almost as distinct, from the same cause; and at that period the Anglo-Saxon, spoken by the bulk of the people, had borrowed few, if any, terms from the Norman-French of the conquerors. By slow degrees this enmity declined; succeeding generations began to converse more freely, and the language of the great majority of the people became the prevailing tongue of the whole, with only a slight tincture of the language of the intruders.[9]

We are told that the people of Normandy and Flanders who followed the Conqueror into England were remarkable for the elegance of their manners and the nobleness of their persons.[1] They were also extremely fond of display, a disposition which prompted them to pay great attention to their dress, and especially to their head-dress. The long curled hair was more particularly inveighed against by the clergy.[2] These, compelled to adopt the clerical tonsure, seem to have been extremely envious of the ornament they had lost, and railed against the nobles and courtiers who boasted its possession. They now denounced it as one of the most heinous of crimes, and a most certain mark of a state of reprobation. But, this not being sufficient, the archbishop himself came to their aid; and it must have been highly amusing to a Norman monarch, who had contrived to evade the papal

[8] M. Paris, Vit. Abbat, 29. col. 1

[9] Henry, iii. 582.

[1] W. of Malms. l. v. 98, col. 1 ; Henry, iii. 583.

[2] Eadmer, Ord. Vit. 682.

censures, to hear a sentence of excommunication hurled against the refractory nobles and all who dared to sport their love-locks; yet all ranks had as great an aversion to long beards as they had a fondness for long hair. With the Normans to allow the beard to grow was an indication of the most vulgar manners, or the most pitiable misery.[3] Nor did they cause only themselves to be shaved, but they were the cause of shaving in others, whenever they had an opportunity, or authority for employing the razor. The example was lost upon the English, and it is mentioned as an act of tyranny in William that he compelled them to follow it, not even permitting them to retain their beloved whiskers on the upper lip.[4] This indignity to their beards was so resented by many that they chose rather to abandon their country than to consent to so cruel a sacrifice.[5]

The costume of the Normans, about the time of the Conquest and for some time afterwards, was simple and graceful. Soon, however, it began to degenerate into a certain fastidious and fantastic foppishness, peculiar, perhaps, to men who have just succeeded to an unexpected fortune; like that of Robert the Magnificent, when at the imperial feast, the dress of the nobles and their knights was excessively rich; "gemmed and jewelled" in proportion to the spirit as well as the rank and office of the party. The caps and bonnets for the head, the shirts, doublets, and cloaks, partook of the same costliness, while special richness was bestowed upon the hose and shoes, on which were lavished all the colours to be seen in the rainbow. The same gaudy set-off was applied to the rest of their apparel, so that ladies' caps and men's bonnets partook of the same

[3] Ord. Vit. 847. [4] M. Paris, Vit. Abbat, 29. [5] Ibid.

variety, the latter being made chiefly of furs or cloth of different colours.[6] The bonnets of kings, earls, and barons, richly emblazoned with diamonds and precious stones,[7] produced a splendid effect amidst the gorgeousness of their religious solemnities and their public spectacles. But shirts made of fine linen were then a comparative luxury, confined to persons of rank and fortune. The doublets were worn next to these shirts, made exactly to fit the shape, and exhibiting a fine field for fashionable caprice, in regard to style, size, and colour, according to the ever "varying Cynthia of the minute." While the surcoats of royalty almost swept the feet, those of the inferior orders reached scarcely half the way, so as not to impede them in their manual or professional labours.[8]

The robe or mantle was another essential part of the Anglo-Norman costume. That worn by monarchs was made of the finest cloth, embroidered with gold, and lined with the most costly furs. Sometimes it was the fashion to sweep the ground with it; at others it was so short as to take the name of *courte mantle,* from which no less a potentate than Henry II. borrowed his surname.

In the time of the Conqueror and his immediate descendants, it was considered most fashionable to sweep the ground with their long cloaks and gowns, the full, wide sleeves of which covered their hands, so that they could neither walk nor do anything else with freedom.[9] The curved, high pointed shoes were as parti-coloured

[6] The Jews were obliged to wear square caps, to distinguish them from their more favoured Christian fellow-subjects. Du Cange, Gloss. t. viii. 483. [7] Strutt, View of Manners, Customs, &c. Plates 42-4-9.
[8] Ibid. [9] Ord. Vit. 612

as the rest, and the hose or stockings, like those of Malvolio, were worn with a brilliancy and grace addressed to the fancy of some favourite of the other sex. William Rufus said that he disdained to wear a pair of stockings that should cost less than about ten pounds of our English money.[1]

We need not enlarge upon the costume of the ladies, either of, or out of the court, that having been with admirable felicity already done.[2] But we may observe, that the Anglo-Normans were extremely delicate, not to say dainty, in the choice and preparation of their food. It is no fanciful theory to suggest that the art of cookery was improved by the feudal tenures, for we are inclined to conclude, from many savoury data, that such was actually the gratifying fact. Coeval with the palmiest state of chivalry was the grand office of cook in all distinguished families. So highly was it estimated that it became hereditary, each successor receiving, at the hands of royalty or aristocracy, the best education and the most enlightened views of the culinary art, so as to embrace in the least compass the greatest possible degree of piquant pleasure, combined with the most costly and magnificent display.[3] A pension, and also lands, being annexed to the office, no wonder that fathers carefully instructed their children in the more abstruse and refined secrets of so attractive an occupation, in which, though many were destined to it from their birth,[4] few knew how to attain pre-eminent success —a result which unhappily led to the question of their

[1] W. of Malms. 69 ; Henry, iii. 584-6.

[2] The Queens of England, by Agnes Strickland, &c.

[3] Henry, iii. 587.

[4] Fleta, l. ii. c. 75.

right of succession, and finally, to the more serious innovation of the office being made elective.

We even meet with estates held in those good old times by the tenure of dressing one particular dish *as it ought to be dressed*.[5] The Normans, indeed, had the more reason to cultivate this liberal but difficult art, because they had generally only two meals a day, dinner and supper; and English sea-faring men "being allowed strong drinks of any kind at the ship's expense, were to have only one meal a day." Norman sailors, however, owing to their receiving only water as the ship's allowance,[6] were permitted to have two meals.

It was the ambition, indeed, of Robert, Earl of Millent, to prevail upon the nobles and gentry to allow of only one stated meal a day in their families.[7] Of this cruel innovation upon the genius and habits of Englishmen, Henry of Huntingdon complains very feelingly, as if it proceeded from "an accursed love of gain, a most vile and contemptible study of economy, rather than any regard to temperance, as that meddling lord and his supporters made pretence." No new church rate or Factories Bill could have been worse received by the English. Nobles and knights all obstinately adhered to the old custom of two and even three meals *per diem*, as their inalienable right from the days of King Alfred, guaranteed to them by Edward the Confessor, and to be surrendered only with the loss of appetite and their lives.

The Conqueror, imbibing, doubtless, a portion of the

[5] Blount's Fragmenta Antiqua, i.

[6] Godolphin's View of the Admiral. Juris. 117.

[7] W. of Malms. ix. col. 2; Fleta, ibid.; Blount.

same heroic spirit, sent numerous agents into the different countries of the world to collect the rarest dishes for his table. By such means, we are told, "that this island, which is naturally productive of plenty and variety of provisions, was overflowed with everything that could inflame a luxurious appetite."[8] At one of these entertainments, which was kept up from three o'clock until midnight, delicacies were served up which had been brought from nearly all the countries of the South and East.[9]

The festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, in which the King spent a considerable portion of his revenues, assisted in diffusing a taste for profuse habits, and it was natural for the haughty baron to imitate, in his own castle, the sumptuous banquets which he had seen in the palace of his lord paramount. The wealthy clergy, both secular and regular, kept excellent tables; and it was not long before the monks of St. Swithin's made a formal complaint against their abbot for taking away three of their thirteen dishes allowed every day at dinner.[1] Those of Canterbury had seventeen, besides a dessert, and all kinds of spiceries and sauces to give a zest to their different courses.[2]

Persons of high rank and good fortunes possessed a great variety of wines as well as of viands, a peculiarity which their descendants have contrived to retain up to the present day. Besides liqueurs of different kinds, they had pigment, morat, mead, hypocras, claret,[5] cider, perry, and good ale. They refined upon the claret,

[8] John of Salisbury, 553.

[9] Ibid. 553.

[1] Giraldus Cambrensis, l. ii. c. 5.

[2] Ibid. 505.—Thomas à Becket is said to have paid about £75 of our money for a single dish of eels.—W. Stephan, Vita St. Thomæ, 21.

[5] A wine sweetened with honey.

also, by clarifying it and adding spices, being decided enemies to the cold-water system.

The Anglo-Normans of William's age piqued themselves less upon being considered men of business or men of letters than men of leisure. Independent of military duties they had considerable time upon their hands. They were proportionally fond of diversions,—martial, rural, theatrical, and domestic.

It was not long before tournaments became the favourite resource during the intervals of war; the church mysteries and exhibitions of the Mimes and Mummers amused the evenings, while trial by battle, ordeal appeals, steeple-races, and boar and stag hunting served to diversify the character of their pursuits. William latterly devoted himself to them with redoubled earnestness, as the extent of his park inclosures increased, and they perhaps formed the best safety-valve, among his great barons, for the escape of treason and *ennui*.

Thus princes and lords indulged their combative propensities without risk, when not employed in their more professed occupation of shedding human blood. William, though more warlike than polished and refined, maintained a court almost the pink of splendour, and he was as fond of promoting magnificent display, as of rewarding dexterity and skill in arms. The king's military assemblies, in fact, were grand public exhibitions, in the reviews and processions of which the feudal heroism of the land eagerly participated,[6] intent on monopolising at once the smiles of the fair and the admiration of the spectators. These mimic feats of war came into fashion some time before the Conquest,

[6] Du Cange, Gloss. voc. torneamentum ; Mem. sur la Cheval. i. 27, 88, 180, 182 ; ii. 11, 263.

but not in England till considerably later, notwithstanding the example of M. de Pruilli, the renowned inventor of the tournament, sham fights, and challenges of every kind.[7] They were discouraged by the Anglo-Saxons, on account of the immense expense with which they were attended, though the efforts of the Norman kings to naturalise them at length prevailed.

In great cities, particularly London, it was a favourite Norman sport to bait wild boars and bulls for the entertainment of the populace.[8] Cock-fighting, betting, and horse-racing held the next rank about the period of the Conquest; and some of the chief barons were as decided patrons of the cock and dog-pits, as the most distinguished amateurs, in modern times, of the turf and of the ring.

In addition to hawking and hunting, skating seems to have been a favourite diversion with the Normans of William's reign, though compelled, we are told, to perform their slippery evolutions upon the shank bones of a sheep. They were so dexterous also as to tilt at each other in their career with blunted spears.[9]

It is hardly possible to form an adequate idea of the ardour with which the Conqueror and his family pursued the sports of the field. So great was their disregard of danger of every kind, that the only wonder is that no more than his two sons, Richard[1] and William Rufus, fell victims to their strange temerity. To those sports they devoted every moment when not engaged in council or in the field; on them they lavished their

[7] Chron. Tournouen, A.D. 1066.

[8] W. Stephan, Descript. Lond. p. 8.

[9] Strutt; Henry; Blount.

[1] Richard, the second son of William, was either gored to death by a stag, or hung, like Absalom, by the hair of his head in a tree.

revenues, sacrificing to them their interest, their honour, and humanity itself. If we are to believe John of Salisbury, "they were the only employments deemed worthy of the attention of kings and the sons of kings; in short, the supreme felicity of royal life. They pursued wild beasts with even greater fury than they did their subjects or their enemies themselves; and by degrees they became almost as great monsters and savages as the beasts which they hunted. Husbandmen were driven from their fields; and if one of the great hunters passed near their habitation, they hurried to present all the refreshments they had, or could buy or borrow,[2] to avoid being themselves hunted, involved in ruin, and perhaps accused of treason." [3]

We are assured that both the clergy and the ladies were extremely fond of the same sports; and Walter, Bishop of Rochester, was so confirmed a sportsman that, though an octogenarian, he was wholly absorbed in the fascinating pursuit, to the neglect of all his apostolic affairs.[4] The young Norman dames were so accomplished in the gentle craft of hawking, that they were thought to excel the most skilful of their knight suitors or pages themselves; from which some historians unfairly assume that hawking must have been a very trifling and frivolous amusement.[5]

The drama then in vogue at William's court consisted, for the most part, of plays composed by the clergy; and, with the exception of some amateur performers, exclusively acted by them and by their scholars. These represented scriptural events, or some illustrious action in the lives of the saints. There were secular

[2] J. Sarisburiensis; De Nugis Curialium, l. i. c. 4. [3] Ibid.
[4] P. Bliseus, Ep. 56, 80. [5] J. Sarisburien. l. i. c. 4, 13, 14.

plays, however, of a very different character,[6] which the clergy were prohibited from attending, agreeably to the 16th Canon of the fourth general council of the Lateran. To judge by their merits, this seemed a very proper measure, consisting as they did of a compound of ribaldry and mimicry, added to other means of raising the mirth of the audience, with little regard to propriety.[7] They were enacted by strollers, well qualified to fill their several parts, who almost uniformly followed in the train of the court and visited the castles of earls and barons, where they were sure to meet with a warm and hospitable reception. Yet their exhibitions, we are assured, were often of the most despicable and even disgusting kind.[8]

Great expertness in the games of cards, of dice, and other modes of dissipating property, was considered an indispensable accomplishment by the Normans. Peter de Blois, in one of his letters to a friend, attributes the profligacy of a youth whom he had under his care to the previous education he had received. "For who can wonder," he says, "that he should prove a vicious young man, who in his childhood was taught to play at dice, which we know is the mother of perjury, theft, and sacrilege?"[9]

"In our times," says another writer, "expertness in the art of hunting, dexterity in the damnable art of dice-playing, a mincing, effeminate way of speaking, and great skill in dancing and music, are the most admired accomplishments of our nobility. In these arts the young lords imitate the examples and improve

[6] Henry, iii.; Strutt.

[7] Du Pin, Eccles. c. xiii. 4, 93; Henry, iii. 597.

[8] J. Sarisburiensis, l. i. c. 8, 32-4.

[9] P. Bliseus, Ep. 74.

upon the instructions of their fathers." Nor was this love of gambling by any means confined to the nobility; clergymen, and even bishops, are said to have spent much of their time in these low arts of plunder.[1]

It appears that the noble gamesters of that period were perfect masters, and that they had no fewer than ten different games of dice, of which the historian, not to scandalise the public, we presume, has given us only the *Latin names*. To such an excess were these pursuits carried in succeeding reigns, that a special law was promulgated against them both in France and England, by Richard I. and Philip Augustus, a measure which was found necessary for the protection of their expedition to the Holy Land.[2] This was not, however, made to extend to the monarchs and to their courts; and it is curious to observe how early class legislation began to obtain, even for the monopoly of iniquitous practices like these. It seems that the royal and noble privilege to sin on this occasion, extended no lower than to the knights and clerks, "for none in our army," runs the act, "shall play at any kind of game for money except knights and clerks, who shall not lose more than twenty shillings[3] in one *day* and one night" . . . "But the two kings shall be under no such restrictions, but they may play for as much money as they shall please." This is extremely exemplary; and then comes the usual penalty for the least infringement of the act to the purport, that "if any other soldiers"—for these mighty monarchs were cautious not to be trapped in their own law, "servants or sailors, shall be found playing for money

[1] Ord. Vitalis.

[2] J. Sarisburiensis; Henry; Blount; Strutt.

[3] Equal to about £15 of our money at this time.

among themselves, they shall be punished in the following manner, unless they can purchase a pardon from the commissioners by paying what they shall think proper to demand. Soldiers and servants shall be stript naked, and whipt through the army for three days. Sailors shall be as often plunged from their ships into the sea, according to the custom of mariners."[4]

Of the religious superstition of the Normans in the Conqueror's reign, many curious and amusing examples are to be found. Monkish legends and lives of the saints had already begun to abound. From these it would appear that the Normans of that age were not less credulous than the people whom they conquered. This naturally opened a rich field for the ingenious fictions in which the old historians delighted to luxuriate. We are entertained with the pranks of imps and demons, related with the same seriousness as the best authenticated exploits of the most renowned knights;[5] and we may wander through a world of miracles, visions, and enchantments, as grand as the Arabian Nights, till we are wearied with the gorgeous display. One of these illustrious sprites, we are assured, happening to be an official personage, and out of place, obtained a character, from whom it is not explained, as a gentleman's butler, the duties of which situation he discharged with the greatest sobriety and probity. Another being of a studious turn, became eminent for his learning, was duly ordained, and rose high in the favour of the archbishop. He was also an excellent historian, and being engaged, we are to infer, as his private chaplain, he used to amuse the dignitary with telling him humorous tales from the stores of his enlarged and curious research.

[4] J. Brompton; Chron. Benedict Abbas; Henry. [5] Ibid.

But one day the conversation happened to take a serious turn, when the learned devil observed that the demons had certainly great power over mankind previously to the Christian era. "After that period," he continued with a sigh, "their power was very much circumscribed. In short," he added, forgetting himself in the agreeable retrospect, as the greatest statesmen sometimes will, "they were obliged to fly for it; some threw themselves into the sea, others took refuge in hollow trees or in the clefts of rocks; while I myself, plunged into a certain fountain, and—"

Finding that he had betrayed his secret, as soon as he had said this, (being a poor modest devil) his face we are informed "was covered with blushes," he pleaded an engagement, took leave of his diocesan, who seems to have expressed no surprise at so curious an occurrence, and was no more seen.[6]

The Anglo-Normans of William's time appear also to have had great faith in auguries, dreams, and the grand art of casting nativities from the aspect of the stars. One of our writers [7] enumerates no fewer than thirteen different kinds of fortune-tellers, who had a noble field in which to display their powers. They not only gleaned after the monks, but employed their own capital, and reaped harvests for themselves. The delusions of all kinds practised upon the ignorance and credulity of the people surpass belief. So deeply were they imbued with them that when some ceased they were open to receive others, till it formed an inveterate habit of their minds; and from the custom of believing everything told them by men whom they deemed as superior to

[6] Giraldus Cambrensis; Itin. Camb. l. i. c. 12, 85, 3; Henry, iii. 575.
[7] J. Sarisburiensis.

themselves in knowledge as in station, they received as gospel new deceptions practised upon them by successive governments, and calculated to keep them, by indirect means, in a hopeless state of ignorance, degradation, and poverty.

No wonder that the shops of the fortune-tellers were then thronged like those of our modern fashions, when delusions regarding national interests and every-day business of life have but filled the vacancy made by the old feudal impostures, aided by monk and fortune-teller —the grand Ephesian idol — still worshipped under other names. Some of these sibyl teachers had recourse to one process, and some to another.[8] Nor did this passion for penetrating into the future prevail only among the common people, but received encouragement from persons of the highest rank and greatest learning. Nearly all our kings, and many of our earls and great barons, had their astrologers, who resided in their families, and were consulted by them in all undertakings of importance.[9] We find Peter of Blois, one of the most learned men of his age, writing an account of his dreams to his friend, the Bishop of Bath, and telling him how anxious he had been about the interpretation of them; but that he had tried the plan of divination by the Psalter.[1]

This credulous disposition and mental subjection to popular errors of so many kinds, appears to have been by no means favourable to the moral character and the conduct of the people. Were we to give credit to the declamations of many writers at this period against the vices of their countrymen, we should be inclined to

[8] J. Sarisburiensis De Nugis Curialium, l. i. c. 12, 853; Henry, iii. 575.
[9] Henry, iii. 403, 575; P. Blesius, Ep. 80, 81. [1] Ibid.

believe that the Anglo-Normans were the most profligate and vicious nation ever known. But these, it is well observed,[2] ought to be received with some degree of caution and distrust, for though a haughty, passionate, and fierce people, the Normans were brave and generous. The violations, however, of the laws of humanity, chastity, and justice, prevailed so much at this period, that they may truly be called their national vices.[3] "When it pleased God to bring destruction upon the English, he employed the Normans to execute his vengeance."[4] Their great power and prosperity appear to have rendered them regardless of that respect and decency with which women were generally treated. Numbers of young ladies of rank, as we have shown, who dreaded their violence, were compelled to take shelter in nunneries, and to put on the veil to preserve their honour.[5]

With regard to their legends and traditions, the names given by the Normans to the imp and elf class of demons, were often very pertinent and significant. From "Gabbe," the old man, employed as the name of a demon, they seem to have formed "goblin" or gobelein (quasi gubbiliein). Saint Taurinus, we are told, expelled one of these mischievous goblins from the temple of Diana at Evreux, though he continued to haunt the town in various shapes. He was there, however, harmless and playful, for the saint had bound him to do no further injury. Not relishing this treatment, the devil of Evreux took it into his head to change his lodgings, and repaired to Caen. In the course of the summer, the citizens of William's good town were much

[2] Henry, iii. 576. [3] Ibid. [4] Hen. Huntingdon, 212.
[5] Eadmer, Hist. l. iii.; Henry, Manners of the Normans, &c. v. iii.

annoyed by him, as he had thus got beyond the jurisdiction of the saint. He was arrayed in white armour, and was so tall that he looked into the upper story windows. Once the noble governor happened to pop upon the intruder in turning a corner suddenly into a *cul-de-sac*, when instead of fainting or running away, he challenged the great ugly goblin to fight. But the demon captiously answered, "I don't hold my commission from you, sir; and I shall give you no satisfaction of the kind." Upon his saying this, six other devils started up, all of the same size, and wearing the same uniform; whereupon M. le Commandant thought it most prudent to beat a retreat.

Ordericus Vitalis concludes his story by studiously showing why the devil was allowed to range as a *détenu* in the town of Evreux, instead of being sent at once into solitary confinement in the black hole.[6]

[6] See Quarterly Review, vol. xxii. 353, 9.

CHAPTER VIII.

Charges brought against King William—Efforts to destroy the English language—Norman French or Romance Walloon tongue—In fashion with all ranks—Question of investitures—Dispute with Pope Gregory VII.—William carries his point—Hereditary succession—Primogeniture—Doomsday Book—Inclosures—Forest laws—Anecdotes of the great land commission—Ingenious modes of enriching the treasury—Partial legislation—Rapacity and avarice of Norman lords and bishops—Odo, bishop of Bayeux—His immense wealth—Ambition—Attempts to sail for Rome—Arrested by William in person—Illness and death of queen Matilda—The Conqueror's grief—Character of his consort—Architectural labours of William and his consort—Their patronage of art—Improvements—Charters — Charges against her memory—Absurd and unfounded—Threats of foreign invasion—Mercenary troops—Rise of the Crusades—Not encouraged by William—Summons a general council at Salisbury—Sets out for Normandy—Rupture with Philip of France—Devastates the country—A truce—Illness of the Conqueror—Sarcasm of the French king—How resented by William—Invasion of France—Accident at the capture of Mantes—Last illness and death—Speech attributed to him—Character of the Conqueror—By the Saxons—By the Normans—Faults of character—Advantages derived from his firm and severe government—His great qualities—Funeral obsequies—Strange interruptions—Singular incidents—Subsequent disinterments—Portraits of the Conqueror—Personal appearance and demeanour—Bayeux tapestry—His great seal—Dissertation regarding his spurs and spoon.

William has been charged by most English contemporary writers with attempting to employ his power as a conqueror to destroy the English language, an undertaking hardly consistent with his acknowledged judgment and penetration in regard to human affairs. The Norman or French was naturally retained and spoken by the nobles and at the court, whence it was

diffused through the higher ranks and the middle orders of society, likewise vassals, knights, and clergy, but without ever pervading the great body of the English people. That, however, there existed not merely a wish but that attempts also were made for its partial substitution, as far as practicable, there was sufficient evidence in the law courts, in public acts as well as in the schools, and in the feudal institutes of the times. Beyond these, the effort, if seriously made, was not successful.

The impression produced by such a conquest, at the same time, was so great that the Norman-French continued to be the vehicle of correspondence, of the religious services, of the national laws, and other public records, up to the reign of the third Edward. The native language, indeed, was adopted to serve special purposes, and on peculiar occasions, as in conducting business with the inferior vassals, the subordinate agents and the bulk of the freemen, common people, and serfs, all of whom seemed instinctively to agree in repudiating that of the Conqueror. This became a traditional legacy, a repugnance which is scarcely yet worn out among the country gentry, the agricultural class, and peasantry of every degree below them.

In the supreme courts and in private circles, the Norman-French was exclusively employed, and it became a sort of fashion for the English of different ranks to follow the example set before them. The English language, then, was preserved only, like a sacred delegated treasure, along with the memory of freer laws and simpler customs, in the heart of the people. Though betrayed by all other ranks—by lords and prelates and knights, with their host of underlings, aided by a Nor-

man police and Norman soldiers ever ready at their beck—the old Anglo-Saxon customs and manners threw their shield over the language of Chaucer and Shakspeare. The spirit of constitutional liberty bade them defiance to the last; still developing, and to be developed, and seeking a temporary refuge from the storm in the breasts of English yeomen.[7]

Yet it is difficult to believe that William was so infatuated by success as to suppose that he could obliterate by any power of oppression the language of a whole people. Whatever were his real motives, his reputed desire to gain a perfect knowledge of that language in his maturer years does not indicate a design to extirpate it: and he had too many real foes to encounter to dream of destroying his best and most enduring monument, destined to spread to the remotest regions the knowledge of his name, his power, and his greatness. There was neither honour nor profit to be derived from such a conquest.

He was, moreover, engaged in a more hopeful contest, about this period, with Pope Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) the successor of Alexander II. on the perplexing subject of investitures, the right to which that pontiff again claimed, threatening to summon all the powers of Europe to his aid. William had both a difficult and a delicate part to play.[8] There was scarcely a potentate of the age whom this fiery pontiff had not excommunicated, not excepting the dreaded scourge of the Church, the freebooting Guiscard himself. Yet so submissively had even this adventurer received the paternal chastisement as afterwards to come to his

[7] Henry; Lingard; Mackintosh; Alison.
[8] Hume; Hallam; Alison; Mackintosh.

Holiness's rescue, when hard pressed in the castle of St. Angelo, by the Emperor Henry IV. The king therefore had to deal with a man very different from his predecessor—equally fiery, more haughty, and as ambitious as himself.

Gregory now called upon him to do homage for his crown to the Holy See, and to transmit the tribute, as his predecessors had before done, alluding to the Peter-pence, which had been voluntarily bestowed as a charity by the Anglo-Saxon monarchs.

The king consented to the payment, but declined the homage; and, farther to show his sense of independence, he refused permission to the English prelates to attend the Papal council summoned to condemn the refractory children of the one Church. After many threats and a variety of ingenious stratagems employed on both sides, William, not a whit dismayed by the failure of the Emperor Henry, persevered in his purpose, and contrived to retain the right contended for up to the close of his reign. But while he thus strenuously opposed his more daring and powerful rivals, few men were more mild to an unresisting enemy. Unfortunately, the repeated conspiracies of the nobles and the hostile spirit of the English had provoked him into acts of cruelty and oppression, which have left a lasting stain upon his memory.[9] Hence the barbarous policy, so opposed to every principle of just government and the progress of civilisation, of seizing the lands of the people, the endowments of the church farms, hamlets, and freeholds, to throw them back into forests and parks, restoring them to their aboriginal dwellers for the

[9] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Hume; Henry; Lingard; Mackintosh.

pleasure of again destroying them, deserves the reprobation of all wise lawgivers: nor less so those absurd and oppressive statutes for their protection, enacting penalties of the most harsh and intolerable kind against the exercise of a natural right, many of which, to the disgrace of common sense and humanity, have been allowed to continue unrepealed to the present day. Our early poets, as well as our historians, dwell with mournful interest upon the depopulating character of these royal and arbitrary enclosures—a bold example not lost upon a grasping aristocracy intent on extending their feudal power.

The picture drawn by Drayton of the New Forest is touching in the extreme. Nor did this all-devouring and avaricious spirit of William's government, from the king down to his lowest officers, escape the justly satiric lashes of other English writers, didactic, moral, and dramatic. Here, as in William's other laws, the grand evil and fruitful source of so many national grievances lay not so much in abrogating the old Saxon laws, as in aggravating their faults and increasing their severity. It was their administration under the feudal system, as in the game and forest laws, in the confiscatory principle, and the amassing of land and other property in few hands, after the Norman domination, instead of the equal and just division among families, which then, as since, led to an intolerable state of national grievance and calamity.

If any proofs were wanting of the results of such a policy, they are to be found in the grand national census commenced by William in the year 1081.[1] Ever

[1] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor. Other writers assert that it was begun in 1078; a third party in 1080. It was not finished till near

active and energetic, it was no onerous task for a mind early habituated to the details of public business to draw out a model scheme by which to ascertain the nature and extent of all the lands—the whole tangible property—throughout England. The comparative value of them in the last reign and the present showed, in many instances, a striking deterioration consequent upon the transfer and amalgamation of smaller farms and tenements into one under the same feudal head.

Still, though undertaken from interested motives, it was highly curious and useful as a lasting record of the national wealth and possessions. This, William had the sole merit of devising, maturing, and putting into complete execution. It was the natural as well as the last and best result of his great Norman system, which by its power of centralisation was intimately connected with the previous stages of its progress. From its public utility also, in the ascertaining of descents and titles, showing just cause of occupation as against all other claimants, including the Crown, this general land registry has been thought to do him more honour than all his victories,[2] though it boasted the not very attractive title of Doomsday-book.

The survey was conducted by commissioners, who took their information upon oath, with regard to the following particulars—the names of all the occupants; the name of every town and village—who held them in King Edward's days—who are now in possession? how many freemen, villeins, and cottagers it contains? how

the close of his reign, if we may believe Ingulphus, the very learned but somewhat apocryphal abbot of Croyland.

[2] Henry, Hist. of England; Mackintosh; Kennett; Rapin; Alison; Brodie.

many hides of land in each manor?[3] how many of the latter in each *demesne?* how much wood-land, meadow, and pasture? how much the demesne paid in taxes in King Edward's days, and how much now? How many mills are there, and streams, and fish-ponds?

This grand inquisitorial registry, like the feudal system itself, took cognisance of the smallest particulars on which to found a knowledge of the resources of the country, and how far its capabilities for bearing imposts might extend. By its means William contrived to raise his annual revenue to the amount of 400,000*l.*, a sum equal to at least five millions of our present currency. But this grand item was independent of other sources of income, in the shape of feudal privileges and royal perquisites, fines, and forfeitures, licences for buying and selling, for granting leave to marry, charters,

[3] To determine the number of each of these divisions of the people, and the whole amount of the population, at the close of the Saxon period, is a problem which we have not the means of solving, notwithstanding the uncommon assistance which we derive from the great survey of the kingdom. It is true that Doomsday Book has not yet been critically examined for that purpose. But it may be doubted whether, if it were, all our difficulties would disappear. Of the thirty-four counties examined by Mr. Turner, four have no persons called slaves, and two of these are the extensive counties of York and Lincoln; while the proportion of slaves to the body of the intermediate class, containing villeins, bordars, and cottars, was in Nottingham as one to a hundred and fifty, in Derby as one to a hundred and thirty-nine, in Somerset as about one to six, and in Devon nearly one to four.

The population of England, according to Mr. Turner's Tables, after the desolation of the northern counties, was about 1,700,000 souls. If we were to throw our intermediate class among slaves, the number of freemen would be reduced below all probability. On the other hand, as long as it is allowed that the villeins, cottars, and bordars were bound by their tenures to serve their masters in agriculture, there is no improbability in the small number of those reduced to the lowest slavery.—Mackintosh, Hist. of England, i. 78; Turner, Ang. Sax. Hist. iii. 284-297

grants, titles, &c., which, added to seizures and confiscations, must have supplied him with nearly half as much more. This was emphatically his own; the queen and the princes and princesses being amply provided for out of other imposts.

Subsidies were moreover granted, as a part of the feudal system, to enable him to carry on the government, as, for instance, upon the marriage of an eldest daughter, or when any of his sons received knighthood. When critically examined, therefore, William's "great terrar," or Doomsday-book, was practically only a more enlarged mode of levying national taxes; and the proceedings of the income commissioners, like those of a more modern date, are said to have been extremely inquisitorial. Nor were they at all dissimilar; their object being only a little more plainly avowed—"to ascertain how much money every man had in his house, and how much was owing to him." Their returns, if we are to believe contemporary authorities, were often partial. When not bribed, however, they were exceedingly minute and particular, taking note of the "horses, black cattle, swine, sheep, and the old dames' hives of bees."[5]

[4] Among these the Abbot of Croyland (Ingulphus), speaking of his own monastery of Croyland, says:—"The commissioners were so kind and civil that they did not give in the true value of it." We may, therefore, conclude that whenever the proprietors made it worth their while, they were equally obliging elsewhere. Yet it was at the risk of severe punishment, that any fraud, favour, connivance or concealment was practised by either the owners of the property or the commissioners. The survey was made by presentment of juries, appointed from every hundred, or wapentake, or county, and sworn in before commissioners, consisting of the greatest earls, bishops, or leading persons in the district. —Brady. Robert of Gloucester, in his rhyming Chronicle, gives a curious account of the Doomsday Book.

[5] Chron. Sax. 186; Henry, Hist. of England.

Other minute returns were ordered to be made by the commissioners, of which we may form some idea by the bulk of the two volumes, the Great and Little Doomsday Book, ordered to be preserved in the English Exchequer. There they were at hand, ready to be consulted, as it was humorously remarked, "whenever it was requisite to know of how much more wool the English flocks might be fleeced."[6] It is singular that, while William was thus employing his Norman agents, he should hope to amalgamate the laws, customs, and manners of the two people. It was like the attempt of king Darius, who had a colony of Greeks and Indians under the same dominion. Herodotus informs us that they quarrelled respecting their dead; the former insisting that they should be burnt, the latter that they should be eaten, until, the controversy growing warm, an appeal was made to his Persian majesty, who summoned the Grecians into his presence: "What is it I hear? that you have refused to eat your dead friends? It is my pleasure that you should conform yourselves to the custom of my Indians, and eat them without more demur." But such was the clamour and violence of the Greeks at the bare idea, that the king sent for the Indians, and declared that it would be better they should agree with the Greeks, and burn their dead. Finding the Indians more intractable than their opponents, he reiterated his orders, and commanded the Greeks to eat their friends without more ado.

The Normans of William, however, showed the superiority of their taste, by feasting upon the English while they were alive, extracting from them the genuine vital principle in the form of goods and money. When

[6] Polydore Virgil.

the great feeders were grown into high condition, they were in their turn served up for the royal table, both lay and clergy; and William's grand survey now furnished him with an accurate knowledge of the supplies in possession of the Church, of the nobility, and of the second and third rate classes of landowners, then gradually emerging into notice. With regard to the crown lands, however, he was too excellent an economist to stand in need of any information[7] which such a survey could afford him. To ascertain the number, quality, and wealth, of all his subjects, by which a political prince might estimate his powers either of resistance or attack, was William's great object; and these particulars lay delineated as upon a map before him.[8] It formed an excellent model for the labours of future commissioners; and for that well-spring of state patronage to which all

[7] The royal revenue was composed in part of the thirteen hundred and twenty-two great fiefs, which paid a rental to the Crown either in money or in kind. In his domestic and economical government, as well as in other particulars, William bore a striking resemblance to the reigning French monarch; and, like him too, he was justly regarded as the most wealthy sovereign of his time.—Chron. de Nor.; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Hume; Lingard.

[8] The feudal custom of going round the boundaries of the parish has continued to the present times. This "seizin or possessioning," as it is called, was recently observed at Waddesdon, Bucks, to the gratification of a number of spectators. The village clergyman acted as the generalissimo, at the instance of a neighbouring duke, who is the "lord paramount," there being several manors in the parish. Abundance of mirth, as well as eating and drinking, continued during the two days. The ancient custom of "turning up," that is, of placing on the head and inflicting the familiar punishment on any one who happened to be met at the boundary points, was performed to the alarm of several parties, especially of those unacquainted with the custom. One traveller, we are told, was met at the boundary of the bridge, riding along, and not having immediately responded to the call made upon him, he was pulled from his vehicle, set upon his head, and received the usual compliment.

ruling parties are in turn indebted for their support. They little imagine, perhaps, their amount of obligation to the old Norman founder of the complicated and remunerating system which now obtains in government, in law, and in the church, in the various details and business character of which no ruler was ever more thoroughly versed.

The great Alfred, indeed, had made a survey of the country, as appeared from the rolls, said to have been long preserved at Westminster: and these probably may have assisted the royal commissioners in their inquiries. The honour, however, of having accomplished the work on so great a scale—a full report of the state of England—was reserved for William. It proved that his stern, but in many respects enlightened system of rule, was his own; and had not his love of order, economy, and strict discipline, been alloyed by avarice, cruelty, and revenge, his vigorous and statesmanlike measures must have been earlier productive of inestimable benefits to England.

The misfortune was, that he regarded it rather as a conquered province, a colony for supplying means to carry on his military enterprises, than a kingdom to which he had succeeded by the free will of the people, as under the Saxon kings. Hence the distinction he made between England and Normandy. The heroic and enlightened leader became the stern, vindictive monarch, when provoked by repeated resistance, goaded by avarice and ambition, and intoxicated with success.[9]

[9] William's was an extirpatory conquest, the object of which was to root out every vestige of liberty, and bring the English into servitude and contempt. The French language was taught in schools, the English forbidden, and everything conducted on the Roman law of conquest, to

He was, however, impartial in his severity; and the wholesome discipline which he maintained at this time (1082), extending to the highest dignitaries both in Church and State, was not without its salutary influence upon the minds of the people. He was desirous of repressing all rapine but his own. The feuds of private revenge, the lawlessness of public robberies, were repressed; and a girl loaded with gold, we are told, might have passed safely through the kingdom.[1] In short, William seems to have been of opinion with the witty Dean of St. Patrick's, that order is the Creator's chief agent, that the devil is the author of confusion, and that nothing can be right or legal of which we cannot render up a strict account.[2]

William attached the same stern doctrine to the discharge of other men's duties from the habits he had early formed of never sparing himself, being equal to the most intense and unremitting exertion, both of body and of mind. It was this animating principle which gave him so undisguised a contempt for his eldest son, Robert of Normandy, whose excessive indolence and general apathy, when not spurred on by some extraordinary impulse, in spite of the pains taken with his education, induced William to predict that his end would be grievous and lamentable.[3]

unnationalise and swamp—in short, to transfer a whole people to the servitude of another people.—See Haddon MSS.

[1] Chron. Sax. 190; M. Paris, 10; Hallam; Henry; Lingard.

[2] Works of Dean Swift, Journal to Stella, ii. Scott's edition.

[3] It appears from some MSS. in possession of the Highland Society of Scotland, that the *Schola Salernitana*, in Leonine verse, drawn up in the year 1100 by the famous medical school of Salerno, was for the use of King William's son, Robert Duke of Normandy. One of the maxims is as follows:—

Of no sinecure nature, therefore, were the offices of the king's great dignitaries, either in Church or State, whose revenues speedily found their way to the royal treasury, unless they exerted themselves as diligently as the generals of his army, or the inspectors of his new police. An incident occurred about this time which admirably illustrates the view we have throughout taken of his character; and which shows that, however avaricious, passionate, and vindictive, when crossed in his royal prerogative, he knew how to take advantage of any flagrant act or outrageous conduct in those around him, to swell the amount of his royal rent-rolls. He spared neither relatives nor nobles, lay nor clergy; and the example he now made of his uterine brother Odo, in his twofold capacity, was a proof of the strict principle upon which he proceeded.

In his prelatic ambition, that dignitary had fixed his eye, like the haughty Wolsey of later times, upon the throne of St. Peter; and, to compass his ambitious views, like him, too, he had grasped and contrived to conceal immense wealth. With this he now proposed to repair to Rome, the time being ripe for the completion of his long meditated enterprise. But he chose the wrong hour; his evil star was in the ascendant; and the rumour of his intention reached the king's ears, who resolved to lose not a moment in securing so great a prize. He was well aware of the violence and

"Si vis incolumem, si vis te reddere sanum,
Curas tolle graves; irasci crede profanum."

No. 6, MS. ii., in possession of the *High. Soc. of Scotland.*

That it was prepared at the desire of William would appear from the following line:—

"Anglorum regi scripsit schola tota Salerni."

extortion by which such wealth had been amassed, even at the expense of his own popularity; and, independent of inflicting due punishment, he had, agreeably to his own prerogative doctrine, a perfect right to the possession of it. Mistrusting the efficacy of his messengers in so important an affair, King William followed them in person, and, travelling post haste, came up with his good brother, the bishop, just as he was on the point of taking ship from the Isle of Wight. He had paid no attention to the royal missives, and started back in dismay when he beheld William himself, accompanied by his officers, enter the apartment. Upon the plea of his ecclesiastical privileges, he had hitherto escaped; no one had dared to lay hand upon the Lord's ordained, entrenched in his sacred ensigns and privileges. These he now urged as vehemently as before to his royal brother, claiming immunity for his sacred office; protesting it was out of the power of any temporal potentate on earth to interfere with him. "God forbid!" cried William, "that I should invade your sacred office, or touch a hair of the Bishop of Bayeux's head; far be such sacrilege from me: I come here only to arrest the Earl of Kent."[4] Then leaving the bishop to take care of himself, the king arrested the earl; but, still gratifying him with an intended voyage, sent him over the sea to the castle of Rouen, where the unlucky prelate lay ensconced up to the close of the king's reign.[5] Other authorities, however, assert that, on William's own voyage into Normandy in the ensuing year, he called the imprisoned earl before him, avoiding all

[4] Nouvelle Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Chron. Sax. 186; Lingard; Hume; Mackintosh; Henry.

[5] W. Pict.; Walsingham.

allusions to the bishop, and after giving him a severe lecture in his temporal character, restored him to liberty; and at the same time pardoned the unfortunate earl Morcar, who had so long lingered in prison.

It was about the same period that William carried into complete effect the inclosure of the New Forest, and other of his royal chases which had at intervals so long occupied his attention. These were purely acts of his arbitrary pleasure, the violence and injustice of which no implied assent of his councils could authorise or excuse. They were enforced with the Norman sword and fire, which swept the population and the harvests before them, and were maintained by the atrocious and sanguinary system of the game and forest laws, which inflicted mutilation[6] and even death; crimes which are still continued to be perpetrated by them, the chief difference being in the kind of instruments of torture employed. Even Blackstone, a tolerably good conservative, designates the modern acts "as a bastard slip of the old stock, those forest laws of the Conqueror." The frivolousness of the cause in planting the New Forest is also alluded to by several writers.[7] It is stated to have extended its ravage over a surface of thirty miles; lands to which the king's title over sees and churches, villages, farms and mansions appears, to say the least of it, very questionable. To his demesne of Windsor he was enabled to show a better right—more becoming the character of a great and magnanimous prince, and he suitably adorned it with one of the most splendid castles in the world. His extreme fondness for field sports can serve as no plea for systematic cruelty and oppression; and it was not

[6] The penalty for killing a stag or a boar was loss of eyes.—Chron. Sax.; Hallam ii. 163.

[7] Hallam; Brodie; W. of Malms.

without some show of reason that the Saxon historians declared that "he loved the tall deer as if he had been their father," of which the penalties attached to their capture or injury seemed to furnish another proof.[8]

Such were William's predilections for these sports; and it further appears that he would have made an admirable Chancellor of the Exchequer; "for" we are told, "notwithstanding his great pleasure in hunting and making of great feasts, he passed all others in levying of taxes to the intent that he would excel all other in riches, or else for to withstand his enemies, or to staunch the appetite of his covetous mind. Also, this man made the New Forest in the county of Southampton, the which to bring about he cast down divers churches."[9]

Forest laws, instead of being imposed, like other laws, by the supreme legislature, seem to have been abandoned to the arbitrary will and discretion of the prince. They were, however, known in England before the Conquest. Under the Anglo-Saxon government, every man had a right to hunt in his own woods and fields; but if he trespassed on the king's hunting he was subject to a severe fine; and in some cases to a heavier punishment.[1] But the rigour of these laws was greatly increased after the Conquest; and it is not improbable that this change was effected by the sole authority of the Conqueror. The royal forests were part of the demesne of the Crown. They were not included in the territorial divisions of the kingdom, civil or ecclesiastical, nor governed by the ordinary courts of law, but were set apart for the recreation and diversion of the king.

[8] Henry; Chron. Sax.; Fabyan's Chron. by Sir H. Ellis; Nouv. Hist. de Nor. [9] Ibid.

[1] Wilkins, 146; Spelman's Glossary, Foresta; Edinburgh Review, xxvi.

This arbitrary government of the forests was assumed by the Crown on the pretence that, being the private property of the king, he had a right to protect them from depredation, and to preserve the game which they harboured for his own use and pleasure. Like other usurpations of authority, this prerogative would acquire strength by precedent, and obtain a sort of tacit confirmation by the silence of the legislature; but, when extended beyond its primitive object, and employed as an instrument of general oppression by the Conqueror and his successors, it provoked the interference of the great council, by whose exertions this arbitrary authority was first limited, and finally wrested from the Crown.[2]

It was no small aggravation of the forest laws that, from the time of the Conquest, the Kings of England assumed a right of not only afforesting the demesnes of the Crown, but of extending the bounds of the royal forests over the lands of others, which became thereby subject to the laws: this seems, however, to have been an illegal exercise of authority. It is so considered by Sir Edward Coke,[3] and was never quietly submitted to by the people. It formed, indeed, a frequent subject of complaint during the reigns of the Norman kings. Another subject which much occupied the attention of King William was, the completion of his grand town palace and fortress, called the Tower of London; he now also proceeded with the bridge of the same name, and with his fortresses in Northumberland, besides various other public works. He had, indeed, at this time, thoroughly succeeded in establishing his feudal system, of which these strong towers, and for-

[2] Edin. Review, vol. xxvi.

[3] Institutes iv. 300.

tresses might be called the bones.[4] The emparking and afforestation of the people's lands—for they were no other—which everywhere surrounded these central citadels of the usurped power of the few, might justly be termed the sinews and muscles which enabled them to act. Among the notes on the amusing poem of the Red King, by the late Mr. W. S. Rose,[5] we observe one in proof of the depopulation of the New Forest, a fact which Voltaire in his random scepticism has pretended to ridicule. Two successive surveys, however, of the lands in question, before and after the afforestation, corroborate the testimony of historians by the diminished value of income which they record.[6] It is not meant to assert, as Voltaire imagines, that an actual forest was created by William; but, that a large tract of wooded country was converted by him into a royal chase, and consequently depopulated, either by the oppressiveness of the forest laws, or by some indirect acts of violence. The latter opinion is espoused by Mr. Rose, and seems most consonant to the voice of history and the character of William.

In the year 1083, William was suddenly called into Normandy by the alarming illness of his consort, to whom we have often observed he was so faithfully attached. The

[4] Hallam, ii. 165.

[5] Parthenopex de Blois, &c., by William Stewart Rose; Edin. Review, xiii. 426.

[6] These are preserved in Doomsday Book. Before the survey of the Conqueror these manors were estimated at 198½ hides, 56 yard lands, 8 acres, 271 pounds, 2218 shillings. In the second census they are represented as consisting of 59 hides, 59½ yard lands, 6½ acres, of which the value is rated at 85 pounds, 964 shillings. The amount of the loss occasioned by the afforestation, therefore, will be 139½ hides, 2½ yard lands, 1½ acres, 186 pounds, 1254 shillings.—See Edin. Review, xiii. 426; Doomsday Book, p. 202.

death of Matilda, the love of his youth, associated with him through so many years of peril and trial, is said to have affected him extremely. She was the only queen who had shared his throne and bed; and, both from early associations and long habits, it is probable that at his age he felt such a blow very differently from some of his profligate and abandoned successors. He is said to have given up his customary amusements, even his favourite field sports; though it must be confessed that his enemies allowed him little leisure for them during the remainder of his reign. She had, besides, no common charms both of mind and person, was extremely accomplished and agreeable, with not a few more solid attainments. Their tastes and pursuits also accorded; a union which is strikingly evinced in the immense number of edifices built by them in common, and other improvements. Both patronised men of art and learning, such as then flourished, and were extremely bountiful in their donations and charitable bequests, if giving back by drops what they had drawn from the people of England by streams can be thought to deserve the name of bounty. Queen Matilda had, moreover, borne to the Conqueror a large family, several of whom died either young, or before their parents. The eldest, Robert, succeeded his father in Normandy, the second, Richard, was killed while hunting in the New Forest, William and Henry were both afterwards Kings of England; and there were five daughters. These were Cecilia, who assumed the veil; Constance, married to the Duke of Brittany, Agatha, contracted to King Harold when an Earl, afterwards to Alphonso, King of Galicia, but who died on her route to Spain; Alice,

who died young, and Adela, who became the wife of Stephen, Earl of Blois.[7]

There are some singular, but, as far as we can ascertain, unfounded charges, which have been brought against the consort of William, by Saxon writers. Her conduct in some respects, indeed, was far from irreproachable; the vindictive spirit that impelled her to denounce her former lover; her abetting Robert in his rebellion; and conspiring to deprive her husband's most faithful adherents of their property, are serious drawbacks, and afforded grounds for the imputation that she was treacherous and abandoned. That she carried on an intrigue with her colleague in the Norman government, the elder de Beaumont, placed in so high a trust by his master, a nobleman old enough to be her father, is an accusation too improbable to be maintained: nor is it likely that any vassal would venture upon ground so dangerous with the consort of a lord paramount like the Conqueror. As if to make these tales still more incredible, it is added that she entreated her consort, after the battle of Hastings, to lay a tax upon "all the bastards in England," and to be permitted to appropriate the proceeds; a cool, sarcastic insult for which she wanted both the courage and the inclination.[8] The whole is evidently a tissue of calumnies invented by some envious or disappointed enemies.

Another source of anxiety to the king at this period

[7] Ord. Vit. 638; W. of Malms. 68.

[8] Upon this, we are told that William, in a great rage, ordered her to be tied to a horse's tail, and to be dragged through St. Giles's to Westminster. This is in perfect accordance with the other tales propagated by the Lady Grentemesnil, of rolling the fair Matilda in the mud, and almost beating her to death with a bridle, for putting one of his mistresses to a cruel death.

arose from the preparations making on a great scale, by Canute IV., King of Denmark, for the invasion of England. It was rendered more formidable by the countenance given to it by William's enemies. Robert le Frison, Earl of Flanders, though related to William, joined the Danish confederacy with 600 vessels. The intrigues of Philip, King of France, with Robert and the disaffected nobles, threatened the stability of his Norman dominions, while the renewed quarrels of his sons, and their extreme licentiousness,[9] embittered the closing years of his life. He soon, however, found other employment for them, and levied an immense army composed of Norman, English, and foreign mercenaries. These were for several months quartered upon the people, and the whole country, moreover, was compelled to pay a sort of poll-tax for their support;[1] an additional evidence that the Conqueror regarded England as a great military colony, adapted for promoting his warlike enterprises not only upon the continent, but against his turbulent neighbours. He had always stipendiary troops at his command,[2] who were quartered upon the people according to the proportion of their estates. Indeed there can be little doubt that, had not his domestic enemies in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, found him sufficient employment nearer home, he would long before have sat down before the gates of Paris, thus first adding to his laurels a conquest reserved for some of his heroic successors.

[9] William wished his son Robert to marry the heiress of Earl Waltheof, which he refused to do; although, smitten with her beauty, he was eager to obtain possession of her charms. Incensed that a ward of his should be treated with disrespect, which he considered an insult offered to himself, it is said that he forbade him the court.—Henderson, Life of the Conqueror.

[1] H. Huntingdon, i. 7, 212; Henry, Hist. of England.

[2] Hallam, ii. 164; Ingulphus, 79.

During his stay in Normandy, King William gave a striking proof of that solidity of judgment which so pre-eminently distinguished him. The first grand crusade was then loudly preached by Peter the Hermit, but his doctrine made no impression upon a mind constituted like that of William. He saw at a glance the folly and impracticable character of such a fanatical enterprise. He ridiculed the arguments set up in its favour; and especially the wild, infatuated love of knight-errantry evinced by Robert, though he did not attempt to dissuade him from so mad an expedition. Nor did he oppose the same design on the part of the Saxon, Edgar Atheling, who was also bent upon a knight-pilgrimage to the Holy Land. William had uniformly treated him with the lenity and forbearance that his feeble character seemed to deserve; and he not only gave him permission, but supplied him with a retinue of two hundred knights, at the head of whom he is said to have served with honour against the Saracens for a period of two years.[3]

In 1084, William was gratified with the welcome tidings that King Canute, daunted by the extent of his preparations, and the continued prevalence of contrary winds, had relinquished his expedition. He was thus enabled to disband his mercenaries, to the great joy of his English subjects. Still he was allowed no time for repose; he had stifled but not extinguished the confederate efforts provoked by King Philip and the rebellious Robert; and he was once more compelled to direct his attention to the affairs of Normandy.[4]

[3] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Smollett, i. 438.

[4] Chron. Sax.; Henry; Hume; Nouvelle Histoire de Normandie; Hallam, ii. 168.

Before leaving England, however, in 1086, William summoned a grand assembly of his prelates, nobles and knights, to meet him at Salisbury on the 1st of August in that year. There he received their oaths of fealty, and required them to advance large sums to defray the expense of his expedition. In thus receiving the fealty of all landholders in chief as well as of their tenants, William broke in on the feudal compact in its mos essential attribute—the exclusive dependence of a vas sal upon his lord.

Upon his arrival in Normandy, he took prompt and vigorous measures to counteract the designs of his enemies. The Count de Nevers had made incursions into Maine, and become master of the castles of Beaumont, Frenay, and St. Suzanne.[5] William soon reduced him to obedience, and, to prevent similar depredations, erected a strong fortress in the valley of Bengy.[6] The other insurgents submitted, and, having knighted his son Henry, who attended him in this expedition, with his brothers, he now determined to call King Philip to a strict account.

That wily potentate had long afforded protection to his rebel son, as well as to his unruly barons; and the long score of grievances was at last to be settled. Recently, two of the Conqueror's sons had been on a visit at the court of France, and a quarrel which took place between the young princes had the effect of exasperating the causes of strife already subsisting on other misunderstandings. Prince Henry, it appears, actually struck Philip's heir. The monarch was greatly incensed, and there was no longer the least hope of accommodating the matters in dispute. Resenting the affront as a

[5] Ord. Vit. 648 ; Chron. de Nor. ; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. [6] Ibid.

personal insult, the King of France was the first to draw the sword. His army crossed the Eure, and began to ravage the plains of Normandy.[7] Seizing upon the town of Vernon, De Beaumont, William's general, threw himself into the fortress, while the king advanced in person to give battle to the enemy. The French, however, had the prudence to retreat, and the Conqueror entered the city of Beauvais in triumph. But there, feeling the symptoms of some approaching malady, he was induced to listen to the terms offered by his rival, and returned by slow marches to Rouen. He was now advised by his physicians to try a course of medicines, with a view at the same time of reducing his extreme corpulence, which had long been a source of annoyance to him.[8] Philip, his mind still rankling with jealousy and resentment, upon being told of this circumstance, made a coarse and insulting observation, inquiring in a scoffing tone, during a public audience, whether "the good old woman of England was yet in the straw?" This silly sarcasm, added to other railleries as innocent of wit, being reported to William, threw him into a violent passion, and he is said to have sworn "by God's brightness and resurrection," that as soon as he got up he would light fires in France for joy of his delivery, that would make Philip's kingdom too hot to hold him.[9]

William was as good as his word. Immediately on

[7] Hist. de Nor. ; Chron. de Nor. ; Hume ; Henry.

[8] Smollett, Hist. of England ; Chron. de Nor. ; Hist. de Nor.

[9] Chron. de Nor. ; Hume ; Henry ; Lingard ; Nouv. Hist. de Nor. This is the sense of William's words, namely, that "he would present so many lights at Nôtre Dame," &c. alluding to the custom usually observed by ladies at that time, after being confined in childbed.—Hume, Hist. of Eng. Hughes, ed. i. 11.

his recovery, he led an army into France, and laid everything waste with fire and sword. He attacked the town of Mantes, which, with its churches and monasteries, he reduced to a heap of ashes.[1] But here his tempestuous career drew to a close.[2] Before the flames were fully extinguished, he entered the town in triumph, and it was now that the accident occurred which brought his extraordinary and eventful reign to a sudden close. In passing by a burning house, his horse placed his fore feet upon some hot embers, and plunged with such violence that the king was thrown upon the pummel of his saddle. In a bad habit of body, and advanced in years, he at once apprehended the worst consequences, and ordered himself to be conveyed in a litter to the city of Rouen, but not till he had compensated the unfortunate inhabitants of Mantes with a large sum of money.[3]

At Rouen, the king was attended by Gilbert, Bishop of Lisieux, and Goulard, abbot of Jumièges, esteemed the most skilful physicians of their time. Notwithstanding all their efforts, the disease gained ground, and they had soon to inform the mighty Conqueror that his end was fast approaching. Finding, too late, that he could no longer enjoy the fruits of his dominion, he did all in his power to compound with Heaven for the blood he had shed, and the injustice he had committed.

[1] Nouv. Hist. de Nor.; Chron. de Nor.; Lingard; Henry; Smollett.

[2] By some writers William is stated to have penetrated as far as the gates of Paris, "the people abandoning all places where he came, and giving forth that it was better the nests should be destroyed, than that the birds should be taken in them. At the last he came before Paris, where Philip, King of France, did then abide; to whom he sent word that he had recovered to be on foot, and was walking about, and would be glad likewise to find him abroad."—Hayward, Life of King William I.

[3] W. of Malms.; Ord. Vit.; Walsingham; Henry.

He first ordered his attendants to remove him to the monastery of St. Gervas, that he might die on holy ground; made haste to distribute such treasure as he had by him to the poor, and in benefactions to new churches and monasteries, so many of the old ones of which he had ransacked and destroyed. He was struck with keen remorse, likewise, for the cruelties and oppressions he had exercised towards the English,[4] being well aware that the memory of the tyrant is long held in hatred by the people.

He is stated, moreover, to have left the sum of 60,000*l.* in alms, as some expiation of the injustice by which it had been accumulated. Orders were given that the English nobles and other prisoners should be set at liberty; and he was even prevailed upon to forgive his brother Odo, whom he had despoiled and imprisoned.

It must have been no affected repentance which opened the prison-doors for the bishop, and brought the Conqueror himself to that last dying speech and confession attributed to him by so many Saxon writers, but hardly, we think, upon sufficient grounds.[5]

After indulging, it is averred, in a long discourse[6]—

[4] H. Hunting.; Ord. Vit. 656.

[5] See W. of Malms.; W. Pict.; Speed; Walsingham; Ord. Vit.

[6] It may be read, however, with advantage by all conquerors and prime ministers, who, in their pride of place, flatter themselves that they can govern the world by coercion alone. How many might repeat with truth the solemn confession attributed to the Conqueror! "Being laden with many and grievous sins (oh Christ!) I now tremble, who am ready to be taken hence, and to be tried by the severe, but just examination of God. I, that have always been brought up in wars, and am polluted with the effusion of blood, am now utterly ignorant what to do; for I cannot number my offences, they are so infinite, and have been committed by me now these sixty-four years; for which, without any delay, I must render

too long and pointless to have proceeded from the lips of so great a monarch—he declared his last will and

an account to that most upright judge. From my tender infancy and age of eight years, I have hitherto sustained the weight and charge of arms to defend my dukedom, governed by me almost fifty-six years, both in preventing those snares that have been laid for my life, and in vanquishing those conspirers which would have usurped my right. A stiff-necked people I may well say my arm hath had to manage; I mean the Normans, who, with a hard hand if they be curbed, are most valiant, and in hazardous attempts invincible. For as they excel all men in strength, so do they contend to overcome all men by valour. But if the rein be once let loose and laid on their necks, they will tear and consume one another; for they are ever seditious, and desirous of new stirrings. Experience of these things sufficiently I have had, not only of my own confederates and allies, but even of my own kindred, denouncing me to be a bastard, degenerate, and unworthy of government. Against these I have been forced to put on armour before I was by age ripe to wield it; all which I have vanquished, and some of them captured, God so preserving me that they never had their desires. A royal diadem which none of my predecessors ever wore, I have gotten, not by right of inheritance, but by heavenly grace. What labours and conflicts I have sustained against those of Excester, Chester, Northumberland, Scots, Gauls, Norwegians, Danes, and others, who have endeavoured to take the crown from me, is hard to declare; in all which the lot of victory fell ever on my side. Yet these worldly triumphs, however they may please the sense and outward man, leave behind an inward horror and fearful care which pricketh me, when I consider that cruel rashness was as much followed as was the just prosecution of the cause. Wherefore I most humbly beseech you, O ye priests and ministers of Christ, that you in your prayers will commend me to God, that he will mitigate my heavy sins, under whose burden I lie oppressed, and by his unspeakable mercy make me safe among the elect. Nine abbeys of monks and one of nuns, which my ancestors founded in Normandy, I have enriched and augmented, and in the time of my government seventeen monasteries of monks, and six of holy nuns, have been founded by myself and nobility; whose charters I have freely confirmed, and do by princely authority confirm against all emulations and troubles. In them God is served; and for his sake many holy people relieved; with such camps both England and Normandy is defended; and in these forts let all younglings learn to fight against the devil and the vices of the flesh. These were the studies that I followed from my first

testament. By this he bequeathed to his eldest son Robert the dominion of Normandy and Maine; to his second, William, the crown of England, with a letter to the archbishop, Lanfranc; and to Henry the sum of 5000*l.* in addition to the fortune of his mother, predicting at the same time that he would some day surpass both his brothers in power and opulence. To the abbey of St. Stephen, at Caen, he presented his crown

years, and these I leave unto my heirs to be preserved and kept. In this, then, my children, follow me, that you may be honoured before God and men. And chiefly, O you, my very bowels, I warn you to frequent and follow the company and counsel of good and wise men, and govern yourselves accordingly: so shall ye long and happily prosper. Do justice to all, without partial affection; for it is true wisdom indeed that can discern betwixt good and evil, right and wrong. Shun wickedness, relieve the poor; succour the weak, but suppress the proud, and bridle the troublesome. Frequent the church, honour the religion, and without weariness be obedient to the law of God. The dukedom of Normandy, before I fought against Harold in the vale of Sanlac, I granted unto my son Robert, for that he is my first begotten, and hath already received homage of all the barons almost of his country. That, however given, cannot again be undone, but yet withal I know it will be a miserable region which is subject to the rule of his government. For he is a foolish proud knave, and is to be punished with cruel fortune. I constitute no heir to the realm of England, but commend it to the everlasting Creator, whose I am; for I possess not that honour by any title of inheritance; but by the instinct of God, the effusion of blood, and the perjury of Harold; whose life bereaved and his favourers vanquished, I made it subject to my dominion. The natives of the realm I hated, the nobles I dishonoured, the vulgar I cruelly vexed, and many unjustly I disherited. In the county of York and sundry other places, an innumerable sort, with hunger and sword I slew. And thus that beautiful and noble nation I made desolate with the deaths of many thousands, woe worth the grief! These, then, my sins being so great, I dare not give the offices of that land to any other than to God, least after my death they yet be made worse by my occasion. Yet William, my son, whose love and obedience from his youth I have seen, I wish (if so be the will of God) may flourish on the throne of that kingdom, with a long life and happy reign."—Speed, History of Great Britain, pp. 432, *et seq.*

and sceptre, the precious chalice, the golden candlesticks, and other regalia used at his coronation.

It would thus appear that the close of the great Norman's career was in no way commensurate with his previous greatness. The devastating fire he had so wantonly employed against his enemies crossed his path in the hour of victory, and cut short his days. But, according to monkish testimony, he died like a good Christian; or they, at least, put into his mouth a confession which redounds so much to their praise; the number of monasteries which he had founded being apparently the strongest claim which he could allege to a reversion of interest above. The decease of this great warrior king took place on the 9th day of September, 1087, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, the twenty-first year of his reign over England, and the fifty-fourth of his ducal power in Normandy.[7]

Few princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to grandeur and prosperity, from the abilities and vigour of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence; his ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, still less under those of humanity, was controlled by the dictates of sound policy. Born in an age

[7] Nouvelle Hist. de Normandie; Speed; Chron. Sax.; Henry; Hume; Smollett; Kennett; Lingard. "Hearing the sound of the great bell in the metropolitan church of St. Gervas near Rouen, William, raising his exhausted frame from the supporting pillows, asked what it meant. One of his attendants replying, 'that it then rang prime to our Lady,' the dying monarch, lifting his eyes to heaven, and spreading abroad his hands, exclaimed, 'I commend myself to that blessed Lady, Mary the mother of God, that she by her holy intercession may reconcile me to her most dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,' and with these words expired."—Ordericus Vitalis; Malmsbury.

when the minds of men were intractable and unacquainted with submission, he was yet enabled to direct them to his purposes; and partly from the ascendant of his vehement character, partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited authority.

Though not insensible of generosity, he was hardened against compassion, and he seemed equally ostentatious and ambitious of show and parade in his clemency and in his severity. The maxims of his administration were austere, but might have been useful had they been solely employed to preserve order in an established government; they were ill calculated for softening the rigours which, under the most gentle management, are inseparable from conquest. His attempt against England was the last great enterprise of the kind, which, during the course of 700 years, has fully succeeded in Europe; and the force of his genius broke through those limits which, first the feudal institutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the several states of Christendom.

Though William rendered himself odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to his posterity, and the throne is still filled by his descendants; a proof that the foundations which he laid were firm and solid, and that, amidst all his violence, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still extended his views towards futurity.[8]

It is interesting to consider the opinions of distinguished historians respecting the character of a ruler, still more extraordinary as a man than as a monarch. The tyranny of William, observes Mr. Hallam, displayed less of passion or insolence, than of that indifference

[8] Hume, Hist. of England, i. 8vo. ed. Hughes.

about human suffering which distinguishes a cold and far-sighted statesman. Observing that the mild government of Canute had only ended in the expulsion of the Danish line, he resolved to rivet his fetters firmly till all resistance should become impracticable.[9] With this view the bishops and abbots of English birth were in a short time deposed;[1] none of the English race for a hundred years afterwards were raised to any dignity in the State or Church.[2] From a like policy, the laws were administered in no other tongue than the French. The name of Englishman was a reproach,[3] and, in less than twenty years from William's accession, the whole soil of England had been divided among foreigners.[4] The English, dispossessed of their estates, resorted to different countries; and many, under the name of Varangians, became faithful supporters of the Byzantine empire, and preserved till its dissolution their ancient Saxon idiom.[5] The depopulation of the great towns was another consequence not less marked of William's feudal government.[6] In the very frame of his laws he made a distinction between the Normans and the English, to the advantage of the former,[7] and acted in every-

[9] W. of Malms. 104 ; Hallam, ii. 160.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Hoveden, 453.

[3] Lyttleton ; Hallam, ii. 161.

[4] Ingulphus ; Hallam.

[5] The question of Norman or ante-Norman occupiers raged warmly between Dugdale and Brady on one side, and Tyrrell, Petit and Atwood on the other.

[6] In the reign of Edward the Confessor there were in York 1607 inhabited houses ; in the reign of William, 967 ; in the former there were in Oxford, 721 ; in the latter, 243. Out of 172 houses in Dorchester, 100 were destroyed ; of 273 in Derby, 103 ; of 487 in Chester, 205. And scarcely any other towns of minor rank failed to exhibit the same proof of decayed prosperity in the decline of their population.—Hallam, ii. 160, 4.

[7] Hoveden, p. 600.

thing as absolute master over the natives, whose interest and affections he totally disregarded. Contumely was even added to oppression, and they were universally reduced to such a state of poverty that the English name became a term of reproach.[8] Generations elapsed before one family of Saxon pedigree was raised to any considerable honours, or could so much as attain the rank of a baron of the realm.[9]

It cannot be doubted, observes an enlightened philosophic writer, that William surpassed all his contemporary rulers in a capacity for command, in war certainly, and probably also in peace. Sagacity, circumspection, foresight, courage, both in forming plans and facing dangers, insight into men's characters, ascendency over men's minds: all these qualities he doubtless possessed in a very high degree. All that can be said in extenuation of his perfidy and cruelty is that he did not so far exceed the chiefs of that period in these detestable qualities, as he unquestionably surpassed them in ability and vigour. It may be added that, if he had lived in a better age, when his competitors as well as himself would have been subject to equal restraints, he would have retained his superiority over them by the force of his mental powers and endowments. It is also true that contests with lawless and barbarous enemies, to which a man is stimulated by fierce and burning ambition, are the most severe tests of human conduct. The root of the evil is the liability to that intractable and irresistible frenzy.

The Saxon chronicler, who tells us that he had lived in William's court, gives him the praise of being wise; which is just, if wisdom can exist without virtue; of

[8] H. Hunt. 370 ; Brompt. 980.

[9] Ibid.

energy, stateliness, splendour, mildness, and generosity towards the clergy, who were his instruments of rule, and of the severe execution of justice upon all robbers except those of his own band. But "so stern was he and hot, that no man durst gainsay his will. He had earls in prison; bishops he hurled from their bishoprics; he overran Scotland; and he would in two years more have won Ireland. In his time had men much distress. He made many deer parks, and established laws by which whoever slew a hart or a hind was deprived of his sight. He forbade men to kill harts or boars, and he loved the tall deer as if he were their father. He decreed that the hares should go free. Rich men bemoaned it, and poor men shuddered at it. But he was so stern that he recked not the hatred of them all."[1] The Saxon, even amidst the ruins of his country, considered the sacrifice of the lives of the many to the amusements of the few as a species of tyranny more insolent and intolerable than any other.

Two legal revolutions of very unequal importance and magnitude occurred, or were completed, in the reign of the Conqueror—the separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil judicature, and the introduction or consummation of the feudal system. Justice was chiefly administered among the Anglo-Saxons in the county or rather hundred courts, of which the bishop and alderman, or earl, were joint judges, and where the thanes were

[1] Yet William was not free from the terrors of superstition, as the following curious anecdote will show. While laying waste parts of Yorkshire, he approached Beverley, the seat of Sir John Beverley. One of his horsemen, riding at full speed into the lands, his horse fell and broke its neck, while the face of the man grew so convulsed that it was twisted backwards. The king, esteeming this but a sorry omen, desisted from his intended violence on that place.—Chron. Sax.

bound to do suit and service, probably to countenance the judgment and strengthen the authority of the court. The most commendable part of William's policy was his conduct to the Pope, towards whom he acted with gratitude, but with independence. He enforced the ecclesiastical laws against simony and the concubinage of the clergy. He restored, as we have seen, the donation of Peter's pence; but he rejected with some indignation the demand of homage made by Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), then elated with the impunity and acquiescence which seemed to attend his pretensions to domineer over the sovereigns of Europe. He seems to have introduced the practice of appeals to Rome in ecclesiastical causes; without which, indeed, the patriarchal jurisdiction of the Roman see was useless. But he separated ecclesiastical jurisdiction from civil by forbidding bishops to hold pleas in county courts, and limited their power to causes of a spiritual nature in their own tribunals.[2]

It is certain that the system of government and landed property, commonly known throughout Europe as the feudal system, subsisted in England from the reign of the Conqueror. It is now as clearly established that the system did not arise on the first conquest of the Western Empire. The most reasonable supposition seems to be that it was gradually prepared in the Anglo-Saxon times, and finished in England by the Norman invaders. The confiscation of a great part of the country for real fidelity and pretended treason, and the policy of placing the administration and the property in the hands of William's followers, gave him an opportunity of esta-

[2] A.D. 1085, Spelm. Con. i. 368, &c.; Rymer, i. 3; Mackintosh, Hist. of Eng. i. 113, 14.

blishing a feudal system, together with the means of supporting it, and motives for immediately introducing it, which scarcely existed in any of the continental nations among whom it had slowly grown into practice.

As authority was won and exercised by war, the military principle of the feudal system was attended by civil administration and territorial jurisdiction. The lord who had the right to the military service of the people of a district, was the only person who had the means of exercising any authority in it. The vassal swore fidelity to his lord, who therefore invested every successive tenant with his land. Every lord had courts, at which his tenants were obliged to serve him in distributing justice to all his vassals. The king was the chief lord, but his jurisdiction was limited to his immediate tenants and to his own domains. Every new inheritor paid a sum of money, under the name of a relief, to his lord on the investiture. Every tenant paid a fine for leave to alienate the fief. It was forfeited for breach of the feudal contract; and it fell to the lord when the descendants of the first grantee were either extinct, or had by their offences become incapable of inheriting. It was a natural provision, though it grew to be an intolerable grievance in England and Normandy, where it chiefly prevailed, that the lord should be the guardian of his minor tenants, and that he should have the disposal of his wards, female as well as male, in marriage.[3] The right of the most petty lord to lead his vassals against their neighbours was not questioned. Private wars raged constantly. All the military tenants were

[3] William was extremely jealous of preserving this part of his prerogative, as head lord, and had so great a number of wards, with a *veto* upon their marriages, as to be productive to him of a considerable sum.

directly or indirectly bound by an oath of fealty to the Crown; but the obligation was frequently eluded, and revolts were familiar. The king, though the lord paramount, was often by no means the most powerful lord; and William himself governed more men and a wider territory than the Capetian prince who reigned at Paris. A feudal kingdom was a confederacy of a numerous body of lords, who lived in a state of war against each other, and of rapine towards all mankind, in which the king, according to his ability or vigour, was either a cipher or a tyrant, and a great portion of the people were reduced to personal slavery. Had the feudal system never existed before, the circumstances of William's conquest would have been sufficient to produce it. It was, however, more easy to transfer it from France to a country where its foundations were already laid by the Saxons.[4]

The portrait of William, as traced by history, when scarcely more than sixteen, was that of a prince destined to rival the greatest of his times. His figure was tall and majestic; his countenance of a manly beauty, indicating the firmness and decision of his character. He excelled in all martial exercises; his intellect was quick and penetrating; his disposition prompting him to great undertakings; while his manners were frank and affable. He was well imbued with a knowledge of all the sciences in repute during the eleventh century, and his progress in them was so rapid as to extort the admiration of his masters.[5]

William's great qualities, indeed, contained the germs

[4] Sir J. Mackintosh, Hist. of England, vol. i. 114, 16, *passim*; Hallam; Smythe; Brodie; Alison, for general view.

[5] Sir W. Temple; Lyttleton; Henry; Lingard; Prévost.

of the noblest virtues; but they were sullied with faults of character which, fostered instead of eradicated on their first appearance, became the source of his future unhappiness, and a misfortune to the people whom he governed. These were an insatiable avarice, ambition, and a keen sense of injury, impelling him to passionate revenge—a disposition which circumstances tended greatly to develop. Here the exhortations of wisdom and moderation were employed in vain; and we have seen how far such a disposition influenced his conduct, and extended its baneful power into the bosom of his own family.[6]

The funeral obsequies of King William I. were attended with some circumstances which exhibit the vanity of human greatness—the sudden and painful contrast between glory and nothingness—the splendour of a throne and the silence of the grave. Robert was not near him in his last illness,[7] to crave his forgiveness or receive his blessing; William had set out for England to secure the crown, and Henry to possess himself of the property and castles which had been promised to him. The body was left in the charge of the inferior officers, who, emulating the example set by their masters, immediately plundered the house of everything it contained; seizing on the plate, money, jewels, even articles of the least value; stripping the corpse of the mighty Conqueror, and leaving it, exposed and deserted, upon the floor.[8] Men, we are told,[9] were possessed with a marvellous fear that some dangerous adventures would ensue. The dead body thus remained from prime

[6] Sir W. Temple; Lyttleton; Henry; Lingard; Prévost.

[7] Ord. Vit.; W. of Malms.

[8] Ord. Vit.; Speed; W. of Malms.; Brompton.

[9] Hayward.

until three of the clock, neither guarded nor regarded by any man. In the mean time, the religious persons went in procession to the church of St. Gervase, and there commended his soul to God. Then William, Archbishop of Roan, commanded that his body should be carried to Caen, to be there buried in the church of St. Stephen; but he was forsaken of all his followers, and there was not any found who would undertake either the care or the charge. At the last, Herlwien, a country knight, upon his own cost, caused the body to be embalmed and adorned for funeral pomp; then conveyed it by coach to the mouth of the river Somme, and so, partly by land and partly by sea, to Caen.

Then the abbot and monks came forth with the usual ceremonies, and numbers of the clergy and the people speedily joined them. While in the midst of the procession, a fire broke out which enveloped great part of the town, and the royal corpse was again abandoned. When it had subsided, a few monks collected by degrees, and followed the body once more towards the abbey church. At length, the bishops and abbots were assembled to perform the last rites, but found they were more easily begun than terminated; for the Bishop of Evreux, after a long discourse, concluded with a request that, if any one present had received any injury at the hands of the deceased monarch, he would have the charity to forgive him. Upon this, one Anselm Fitz-Arthur sprung up, and with a loud voice exclaimed: "This ground was once the floor of my father's house, which that man of whom you spoke, when Duke of Normandy, seized by violence, to found thereon this religious edifice. This he did not by ignorance or oversight, by any necessity of state, but to satisfy his

covetous desires. I therefore challenge this ground as my right; and do here charge you, as you will answer it before the fearful face of Almighty God, that the body of the spoiler be not covered with the earth of my inheritance."

Witness of this being produced, the nobles and bishops agreed to give the challenger three pounds for the place of burial, undertaking that he should receive compensation for the rest of his loss, which was afterwards paid by prince Henry, to the amount of one hundred pounds.

When the body was about to be lowered into the grave, an accident occurred, owing to which it is said to have burst, and so overpowering rose the effluvia from it that not all the incense and perfumes made use of in the embalming, and in the church, were powerful enough to purify the air; and all parties made the utmost haste they could to complete their work, "the people departing in a sad silence, discoursing diversely afterwards of all these extraordinary accidents."

It might be expected that a sepulchre obtained with so much difficulty would have been allowed to remain undisturbed. But it seemed as if he who had never known what it was to rest during his life was to be denied repose even in his grave. In 1542, we are told,[1] the bishop of Bayeux, having an extraordinary curiosity to behold the remains of so great a conqueror, obtained permission from the authorities to examine his tomb.[2] After removing the stone cover which protected the grave, the coffin was opened, and the remains of the once majestic Conqueror, almost as entire as when deposited nearly 500 years before, were

[1] Darel, Norman Antiquities; Ord. Vit. [2] Ibid.

exposed to public view. It was then ascertained that his height exceeded that of ordinary men, and that the bones were still more remarkable for their gigantic size,[3] which served to account for his unequalled strength.

The good bishop, astonished to see the body of the Conqueror in such a state of preservation, ordered a drawing to be made of it by one of the most distinguished artists in Caen, which, when completed, was exhibited publicly on the abbey walls, opposite to the handsome monument raised by William Rufus to his father's memory. There was also found carefully laid up in the tomb a plate of gilded copper, which bore an inscription supposed to have been written by Thomas, Archbishop of York, which has been rendered into the following English verse :—

"He who the sturdy Normans ruled, and over England reigned,
And stoutly won and strongly kept what he had so obtained,
And did the swords of those of Maine by force bring under awe,
And made them under his command live subject to his law ;
This great King William lieth here intombed in little grave,
So great a lord, so small a house sufficeth him to have :
When Phœbus in the Virgin's lap his circled course applied
And twenty-three degrees had passed, e'en at that time he died."

The tomb having been carefully closed, was left in the same state as when it had been opened. But it did not long continue undisturbed. In the year 1562, Châtillon occupied the city of Caen, and a party of soldiers breaking into the abbey threw down the monument, completely despoiling it of its costly ornaments, and proceeded to rifle the tomb itself. Not meeting with the treasures they expected, they took the body of the Conqueror and scattered his bones, in their rage, on all

[3] Ducarel, Norman Antiquities ; Ord. Vit. ; Hayward ; Prévost.

sides. A number of English soldiers, happening to be in the town, made a point of collecting them; and it is said that they were afterwards brought into England.[4] Another account is, that one of the thigh-bones came into the possession of the viscount Falaise, who restored it to the royal grave. Historical testimony is borne by M. de Bras that the said bone exceeded the usual length allotted to thigh-bones by nearly four inches, and was the largest he had ever seen.[5] We are told, by the same authority, that the painting made by command of the bishop fell to the share of the gaoler of Caen, who cut it into two parts, one of which he turned to the use of a table, the other into a cupboard door; a fact from which we may infer that it was drawn upon panel. Some of these relics of the great politician, who always expressed so remarkable a veneration for relics, and turned them to so good an account, were recovered by M. le Bras, who greatly prized them during the remainder of his life.[6]

We need not here remark upon the incompatibility of the two stories; for if, in 1542, the body was found in such high preservation, it would scarcely have been reduced to a mere skeleton in 1562, though this is a point we would willingly refer to the resurrectionary experience of the great soldiers and levellers of past ages. Nor can we quite credit, as is asserted, that the body was full eight feet in length, or much exceeding that of a somewhat tall and strong-built man. A third version of these repeated spoliations of the Conqueror's remains is, that, in 1642, the monks of St. Stephen collected the bones of their royal founder, and raised over

[4] Hayward, Life of King William I.

[5] Ducarel; Norman Antiquities.

[6] Ibid.

their last resting-place a strong altar-shaped tomb, as if to deter further sacrilege, in the same chancel where stood the former monument.[7] The nuns of the Holy Trinity performed a similar pious office for the tomb of their royal patroness, by repairing the costly monument erected to her memory by William himself, and replacing the scattered fragments of her statue, which they set up in the centre of the choir, upon a handsome marble tomb, guarded by a fence of iron spikes, and enveloped with ancient tapestry.[8]

There was something remarkably striking and majestic in the air and expression of William the Conqueror. Loftiness of stature, stern yet handsome regular features, and surpassing strength, combined with energy and easy graceful action, gave to his whole appearance and address an ascendency which impressed the mind of the beholder. Yet, with that versatility of character which distinguishes most great men, he could assume,

7 In the middle of the choir, just before the high altar, where the body of the Conqueror was first deposited. The stately monument first erected to him by his son, William Rufus, was the work of Odo, a goldsmith of Caen. The figure of the Conqueror was sculptured as large as life, arrayed in his robes of state, upon its summit, and at the foot of it was inscribed the epitaph.

8 Ducarel, Norman Antiquities ; Nouvelle Hist. de Nor. In the Anglo-Norman Antiquities, by the learned and very amusing Doctor (Ducarel), so richly illustrated, may be found a great variety of curious particulars relating to the Norman kings ; the abbeys, castles, and palaces founded by them ; their tombs and monuments ; with the long Latin epitaphs, then so fashionable and full of eulogy—the vain oblation to deceased majesty. There are several to William the Conqueror, to which it will be more convenient to refer the curious reader than to try the patience of all by giving them in their native garb. The literary illustrations, likewise, of this ingenious traveller and learned ornament of Doctors' Commons, will repay the attention of the tourist, who is fond of exploring the church and palace architecture of Normandy.

in his happier moments, a fascination of manner, the soul-lit brilliant eye, the irresistible smile and charm of voice, the proud distinction of lofty intellect, which disarmed the soldier and the monarch of all his terrors. No wonder that, thus gifted, he dictated the fashion to the court and the law to the country. His spacious forehead was somewhat bald; his beard was closely shaved, a fashion which he first introduced, and one gradually followed by all the Normans.

In the antiquarian work of Ducarel are several portraits of the Conqueror, with the coats of arms, medals, monuments, charters, and seals. One of the original portraits is stated[9] to have been in existence up to the year 1789, in a room near the old gateway of the monastery at Caen, and in a good state of preservation. A very inferior copy of this was taken, while the original, it is believed, was allowed to perish upon the damp and exposed wall.

On one side of the portrait were displayed the lilies of France in their reduced number of three, and on the other the leopards of Normandy.

The date of this portrait and the occasion of it are well known.[1] An engraving of it is given in Ducarel,[2] but its authenticity, to say nothing of its being a contemporary and original portrait of William, would appear to be very questionable. It is described as a mere daub on the wall of the porter's lodge, with much the same claim to authenticity as the old family portraits at Lumley Castle, or even the Ely painting. In its bluff figure it betrays rather the garb and air of one

[9] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lix. 11.

[1] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lix. 782.

[2] Norman Antiquities.

of our modern Eighth Harrys than a Norman warrior of the eleventh century.[5]

We have abstained from giving any account of the famous Bayeux tapestry, an exact description of which has been presented to the public by Miss Strickland, in her admirably written Lives of the English Queens. We may refer our readers, however, to the amusing work of Dr. Ducarel, for that and other curious matters, and to the works of Montfaucon.

The use of broad or great seals, and affixing impressions of them in wax by pendent labels, to charters and other public instruments, is known to have been practised by the Normans very early; and it is probable that from them it passed into England.

The seal of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, is not only extremely rare, but very singular as regards the figures represented on it. On one side he appears as an earl, mounted on his war-horse, at full speed, clad in armour, and holding a sword in his right hand; on the reverse in the character of a bishop, dressed in his pontifical robes, and pronouncing the benediction.

The Conqueror was careful not to encroach upon Odo's prelatical character, but he arrested him as Earl of Kent, seized on all his treasures, and threw him into a dungeon, showing the danger of a great prelate intermeddling in the temporal affairs of the kingdom.

In one of the numbers of the "Gentleman's Magazine," already alluded to, may be found a curious antiquarian controversy respecting the fate of the spurs and spoon belonging to the Conqueror.[6] It appears

[5] Mémoires de la Monarchie Française.

[6] Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lx. 1780.

that, though long handed down as an heir-loom, they suddenly and strangely disappeared, and the question was, what became of them? One of the correspondents of "The Gentleman" ingeniously suggests "that they might have been pawned" by one of his successors, we are to presume, in some court panic or military adventure, to raise "the ways and means." With regard to the spurs, he might with more show of chivalry have suggested that the Conqueror had lent them to the champion of his old *protegé*, Edgar Atheling, on occasion of that prince challenging his accuser to open combat,[7] who had taxed him with conspiring against the Conqueror's crown.

[7] William compelled him to accept it, and make good his charge, if he was able, by the special ordeal of battle. The king presided as a witness of the scene; the Saxon slew the maligner of the orphan family, and William, deciding according to custom, that Heaven had declared for the innocent, ever after treated Edgar and the princes and princesses of Scotland with due consideration and kindness.

APPENDIX.

"THE names of such Nobles and Gentlemen of marque who came in at this time with the Conqueror."—*Holinshed's Chronicle.*

Aumarle
Aincourt
Audeley
Angilliam
Argentonne
Arundell
Avenant
Abell
Auverne
Aunwers
Angers
Angenoune
Archere
Anvay
Aspervile
Albevile
Andevile
Amoverdvile
Arcy
Akeny
Albeny
Aybevare
Amay
Aspernound
Amerenges

Bertram
Buttecourt
Brehus
Byseg
Bardolfe
Basset
Bigot
Bohun
Bailif
Bondevile
Brabason
Baskervile

Bures
Bonnilaine
Bois
Botelere
Bourcher
Brabaion
Berners
Braibuf
Brande
Bronce
Burgh
Bushey
Banet
Breton
Bluet
Blondell
Baious
Browne
Beke
Bickard
Banastre
Baloun
Beauchampe
Bray
Bandy
Bracy
Boundes
Bascoun
Broilem
Brolevy
Burnell
Bellet
Baudewin
Beaumont
Burdon
Bertevilay
Barre
Bussvile

Blunt
Beaupere
Beville
Bardvedor
Brette
Barret
Bonrett
Bainard
Barnivale
Bonett
Barry
Bryan
Bodin
Bertevile
Bertin
Bernevile
Bellewe
Bevery
Bushell
Boranvile
Browe
Belevers
Buffard
Bouveyer
Botevile
Bellire
Bastard
Brasard
Beelhelme
Braine
Breut
Braunch
Belesuz
Blundell
Burdett
Bagott
Beauvise
Belemis

Beisin
Bernou
Boels
Belefroun
Brutz
Barchampe

Camois
Camvile
Chawent
Chauncy
Conderay
Colvile
Chamberlain
Champernoun
Comin
Columber
Cribett
Creuquere
Corbine
Corbett
Chaundos
Chaworth
Cleremaus
Clarell
Chopis
Chaunduit
Chautelow
Chamberay
Cressy
Curtenay
Conestable
Cholmeley
Champney
Chawnos
Comivile
Champaine
Carevile
Carbonelle
Charles
Chereberge
Chawnes
Chaumont
Caperoun
Cheine
Curson
Coville
Chaiters
Cheines
Cateray
Cherecourt
Cammile
Clerenay

Curly
Cuily
Clinels
Clifford
Courteney

Denaville
Dercy
Dive
Dispencere
Daubeny
Daniell
Devise
Druell
Devaus
Davers
Dodingsels
Darell
Delaber
Delapole
Delalinde
Delahill
Delaware
Delavache
Dakeney
Dauntre
Desny
Dabernoune
Damry
Daveros
Davonge
Duilby
Delavere
Durange
Delahoid
Delee
Delaund
Delaward
Delaplanch
Damnot
Danway
Dehense
Devile
Disard
Doiville
Durant
Drury
Dabitot
Dunsterville
Dunchampe
Dambelton

Estrange
Estutevile

Engaine
Estriels
Esturney

Ferrerers
Folvile
Fitzwater
Fitzmarmaduke
Flevez
Filbert
Fitz-Roger
Favecourt
Ferrers
Fitz Philip
Filiot
Furniveus
Furnivans
Fitz Otes
Fitz-William
Fitz Roand
Fitz Pain
Fitz Auger
Fitz Aleyn
Fitz Rauff
Fitz Browne
Foke
Frevile
Front de Boef
Facunberge
Fort
Frisell
Fitz Simon
Fitz Fouk
Filioll
Fitz Thomas
Fitz Morice
Fitz Hugh
Fitz Henrie
Fitz Warren
Fitz Rainold
Flamvile
Formay
Fitz Eustach
Fitz Laurence
Fornibaud
Frisound
Finere
Fitz Robert
Furnivale
Fitz Geffrey
Fitz Herbert
Fitz Perez
Fichet

Fitz Rewes
Fitz Fitz
Fitz John
Fleschampe

Gurnay
Gressy
Graunson
Gracy
Georges
Gower
Gaugy
Goband
Gray
Gaunson
Golofre
Gobion
Grensy
Graunt
Greile
Grevet
Gurry
Gurley
Gramnori
Gernoun
Grendon
Gurdon
Gines
Grivell
Grenevile
Glatevile
Gurney
Giffard
Goverges
Gamages

Hauntenay
Haunsard
Hastings
Hanlay
Haurell
Husee
Hercy
Herioun
Herne
Harcourt
Henoure
Hovell
Hamelin
Harewell
Hardell
Hakett
Hamound
Harcord

Jarden
Jay
Jeniels
Jerconvise
Janvile
Jaspervile

Kaunt
Karre
Karrowe
Keine
Kimaronne
Kiriell
Kancey
Kenelre

Loveny
Lacy
Linneby
Latomer
Loveday
Lovell
Lemare
Levetot
Lucy
Luny
Logevile
Longespes
Loverace
Longchampe
Lascales
Lovan
Leded
Luse
Lotorell
Loruge
Longuevale
Loy
Lorancourt
Loions
Limers
Longepay
Laumale
Lane
Lovetot

Mohant
Mowne
Maundevile
Marmilon
Moribray
Morvile
Miriell
Manlay

Malebraunch
Malemaine
Mortimer
Mortimaine
Muse
Marteine
Mountbother
Mountsoler
Malevile
Malet
Mounteney
Monfichet
Maleherbe
Mare
Musegros
Musarde
Moine
Montravers
Merke
Murres
Mortivale
Monchenesy
Mallory
Marny
Mountagu
Mountford
Maule
Monhermon
Musett
Menevile
Mantenevan
Manfe
Menpincoy
Maine
Mainard
Morell
Mainell
Maleluse
Memorous
Morreis
Morleian
Malevere
Mandut
Mount Marten
Mantelet
Miners
Mauclerke
Mounchenell
Movet
Meintenore
Meletak
Manvile
Mangisere

Maumasin
Mountlovel
Mawrewarde
Monhaut
Meller
Mountgomerie
Maularde
Menere
Martinast
Mare
Mainwaring
Matelay
Malemis
Maleheire
Moren
Melun
Marceans
Maiell
Morton

Noers
Nevile
Newmarch
Norbet
Norice
Newborough
Neiremet
Neile
Normavile
Neofmarch
Nermitz
Nembrutz

Otevell
Olibef
Olifant
Osenel
Oisell
Olifard
Orinall
Orioll

Pigott
Pery
Perepount
Pershale
Power
Painell
Peche
Pavey
Pevrell
Perot
Picard
Pinkenie
Pomeray
Pounce
Pavely
Paifrere
Plukenet
Phuars
Punchardoun
Pinchard
Placy
Pugoy
Patefinc
Place
Pampilioun
Percelay
Perere
Pekeny
Poterell
Peukeny
Peccell
Pinell
Putrill
Petivoll
Preaus
Pantolf
Peito
Penecord
Prendirlegast
Percivale

Quinci
Quintiny

Ros
Ridell
Rivers
Rivell
Rons
Rushell
Raband
Roud
Rie
Rokell
Risers
Randvile
Roselin
Rastoke
Rinvill
Rougere
Rait
Ripere
Rigny
Richmound
Rochford
Raimond
Souch
Shevile
Senchens
Senclerc
Sent Quentin
Sent Omere
Sent Amond
Sent Legere
Somervile
Siward
Sansovere
Sanford
Sanctes
Savay
Saulay
Sules
Sorell
Somerey
Sent John
Sent George
Sent Les
Sesse
Salvin
Say
Solers
Sent Albin
St. Martin
Sourdemale
Seguin
Sent Barbe
Sent Vile
Souremount
Soreglise
Sandvile
Sauncey
Sirewast
Sent Cheveroll
Sent More
Sent Scudemore

Toget
Tercy
Tuchet
Tracy
Trousbut
Trainell
Taket
Trussell
Trison
Talbout
Touny
Traies
Tollemach

Toulous	Vere	Urnall
Tanny	Vernoun	Unket
Touke	Vescy	Urnafull
Tibtote	Verdoune	Vasderoll
Turbevile	Valence	Vaberon
Turvile	Verdeire	Valingford
Tomy	Vavasour	Venicorde
Taverner	Vendore	Valive
Trenchevile	Verlay	Viville
Trenchelion	Valenger	Vancorde
Tankervile	Venables	Valenges
Tirell	Venoure	
Trivet	Vilan	Wardebois
Tolet	Verland	Ward
Travers	Valers	Wafre
Tardevile	Veirny	Wake
Turburvile	Vavurvile	Wareine
Tinevile	Veniels	Wate
Torell	Verrere	Watelin
Tortechappel	Uschere	Watevile
Trusbote	Veffay	Wely
Treverel	Vanay	Werdonell
Tenwis	Vian	Wespaile
Totelles	Vernoys	Wivell *

* Other lists are extant in Grafton, Stowe, and, where you would not expect to find such a thing, in Fox's "Acts and Monuments," vulgarly called the "Book of Martyrs." But this is the most copious. There was also another table, setting forth the chief of William's captains by the title of their estates which they held in Normandy, such as Robert Erle of Mortaigne, Le Seigneur d'Episnay, Le Seigneur de Longueville, and a few only by any surname.—*Vestig. Anglicana.*

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